The Chuang-tzu

A Translation of Selected Chapters by Lin Yutang

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A Happy Excursion

In the northern ocean there is a fish, called the k'un, I do not know how many thousand li in size. This k'un changes into a bird, called the p'eng. Its back is I do not know how many thousand li in breadth. When it is moved, it flies, its wings obscuring the sky like clouds.

When on a voyage, this bird prepares to start for the Southern Ocean, the Celestial Lake. And in the Records of Marvels we read that when the p'eng flies southwards, the water is smitten for a space of three thousand li around, while the bird itself mounts upon a great wind to a height of ninety thousand li, for a flight of six months' duration.

There mounting aloft, the bird saw the moving white mists of

spring, the dust-clouds, and the living things blowing their breaths among them. It wondered whether the blue of the sky was its real color, or only the result of distance without end, and saw that the things on earth appeared the same to it.

If there is not sufficient depth, water will not float large ships. Upset a cupful into a hole in the yard, and a mustard-seed will be your boat. Try to float the cup, and it will be grounded, due to the disproportion between water and vessel.

So with air. If there is not sufficient a depth, it cannot support large wings. And for this bird, a depth of ninety thousand li is necessary to bear it up. Then, gliding upon the wind, with nothing save the clear sky above, and no obstacles in the way, it starts upon its journey to the south.

A cicada and a young dove laughed, saying, "Now, when I fly with all my might, 'tis as much as I can do to get from tree to tree. And sometimes I do not reach, but fall to the ground midway. What then can be the use of going up ninety thousand li to start for the south?"

He who goes to the countryside taking three meals with him comes back with his stomach as full as when he started. But he who travels a hundred li must take ground rice enough for an overnight stay. And he who travels a thousand li must supply himself with provisions for three months. Those two little creatures, what should they know?

Small knowledge has not the compass of great knowledge any more than a short year has the length of a long year. How can we tell that this is so? The fungus plant of a morning knows not the alternation of day and night. The cicada knows not the alternation of spring and autumn. Theirs are short years. But in the south of Ch'u there is a mingling (tree) whose spring and autumn are each of five hundred years' duration. And in former days there was a large tree which had a spring and autumn each of eight thousand years. Yet, P'eng Tsu {1} is known for reaching a great age and is still, alas! an object of envy to all!

It was on this very subject that the Emperor T'ang {2} spoke to Chi, as follows: "At the north of Ch'iungta, there is a Dark Sea, the Celestial Lake. In it there is a fish several thousand li in breadth, and I know not how many in length. It is called the k'un. There is also a bird, called the p'eng, with a back like Mount T'ai, and wings like clouds across the sky. It soars up upon a whirlwind to a height of ninety thousand li, far above the region of the clouds, with only the clear sky above it. And then it directs its flight towards the Southern Ocean.

"And a lake sparrow laughed, and said: Pray, what may that

creature be going to do? I rise but a few yards in the air and settle down again, after flying around among the reeds. That is as much as any one would want to fly. Now, wherever can this creature be going to?" Such, indeed, is the difference between small and great.

Take, for instance, a man who creditably fills some small office, or whose influence spreads over a village, or whose character pleases a certain prince. His opinion of himself will be much the same as that lake sparrow's. The philosopher Yung of Sung would laugh at such a one. If the whole world flattered him, he would not be affected thereby, nor if the whole world blamed him would he be dissuaded from what he was doing. For Yung can distinguish between essence and superficialities, and understand what is true honor and shame. Such men are rare in their generation. But even he has not established himself.

Now Liehtse {3} could ride upon the wind. Sailing happily in the cool breeze, he would go on for fifteen days before his return. Among mortals who attain happiness, such a man is rare. Yet although Liehtse could dispense with walking, he would still have to depend upon something. {4}

As for one who is charioted upon the eternal fitness of Heaven and Earth, driving before him the changing elements as his team to roam through the realms of the Infinite, upon what, then, would such a one have need to depend? Thus it is said, "The perfect man ignores self; the divine man ignores achievement; the true Sage ignores reputation."

The Emperor Yao {5} wished to abdicate in favor of Hsu: Yu, saying, "If, when the sun and moon are shining, the torch is still lighted, would it be not difficult for the latter to shine? If, when the rain has fallen, one should still continue to water the fields, would this not be a waste of labor? Now if you would assume the reins of government, the empire would be well governed, and yet I am filling this office. I am conscious of my own deficiencies, and I beg to offer you the Empire."

"You are ruling the Empire, and the Empire is already well ruled," replied Hsu: Yu. "Why should I take your place? Should I do this for the sake of a name? A name is but the shadow of reality, and should I trouble myself about the shadow? The tit, building its nest in the mighty forest, occupies but a single twig. The beaver slakes its thirst from the river, but drinks enough only to fill its belly. I would rather go back: I have no use for the empire! If the cook is unable to prepare the funeral sacrifices, the representative of the worshipped spirit and the officer of prayer may not step over the wines and meats and do it for him."

Chien Wu said to Lien Shu, "I heard Chieh Yu: talk on high and fine subjects endlessly. I was greatly startled at what he said, for

his words seemed interminable as the Milky Way, but they are quite detached from our common human experience."

"What was it?" asked Lien Shu.

"He declared," replied Chien Wu, "that on the Miao-ku-yi mountain there lives a divine one, whose skin is white like ice or snow, whose grace and elegance are like those of a virgin, who eats no grain, but lives on air and dew, and who, riding on clouds with flying dragons for his team, roams beyond the limit's of the mortal regions. When his spirit gravitates, he can ward off corruption from all things, and bring good crops. That is why I call it nonsense, and do not believe it."

"Well," answered Lien Shu, "you don't ask a blind man's opinion of beautiful designs, nor do you invite a deaf man to a concert. And blindness and deafness are not physical only. There is blindness and deafness of the mind. His words are like the unspoiled virgin. The good influence of such a man with such a character fills all creation. Yet because a paltry generation cries for reform, you would have him busy himself about the details of an empire!

"Objective existences cannot harm. In a flood which reached the sky, he would not be drowned. In a drought, though metals ran liquid and mountains were scorched up, he would not be hot. Out of his very dust and siftings you might fashion two such men as Yao and Shun {6}. And you would have him occupy himself with objectives!"

A man of the Sung State carried some ceremonial caps to the Yu:eh tribes for sale. But the men of Yu:eh used to cut off their hair and paint their bodies, so that they had no use for such things.

The Emperor Yao ruled all under heaven and governed the affairs of the entire country. After he paid a visit to the four sages of the Miao-ku-yi Mountain, he felt on his return to his capital at Fenyang that the empire existed for him no more.

Hueitse {7} said to Chuangtse, "The Prince of Wei gave me a seed of a large-sized kind of gourd. I planted it, and it bore a fruit as big as a five bushel measure. Now had I used this for holding liquids, it would have been too heavy to lift; and had I cut it in half for ladles, the ladles would have been too flat for such purpose. Certainly it was a huge thing, but I had no use for it and so broke it up."

"It was rather you did not know how to use large things," replied Chuangtse. "There was a man of Sung who had a recipe for salve for chapped hands, his family having been silk-washers for generations. A stranger who had heard of it came and offered him

a hundred ounces of silver for this recipe; whereupon he called together his clansmen and said, 'We have never made much money by silk-washing. Now, we can sell the recipe for a hundred ounces in a single day. Let the stranger have it.'

"The stranger got the recipe, and went and had an interview with the Prince of Wu. The Yu:eh State was in trouble, and the Prince of Wu sent a general to fight a naval battle with Yu:eh at the beginning of winter. The latter was totally defeated, and the stranger was rewarded with a piece of the King's territory. Thus, while the efficacy of the salve to cure chapped hands was in both cases the same, its applications were different. Here, it secured a title; there, the people remained silk-washers.

"Now as to your five-bushel gourd, why did you not make a float of it, and float about over river and lake? And you complain of its being too flat for holding things! I fear your mind is stuffy inside."

Hueitse said to Chuangtse, "I have a large tree, called the ailanthus. Its trunk is so irregular and knotty that it cannot be measured out for planks; while its branches are so twisted that they cannot be cut out into discs or squares. It stands by the roadside, but no carpenter will look at it. Your words are like that tree -- big and useless, of no concern to the world."

"Have you never seen a wild cat," rejoined Chuangtse, "crouching down in wait for its prey? Right and left and high and low, it springs about, until it gets caught in a trap or dies in a snare. On the other hand, there is the yak with its great huge body. It is big enough in all conscience, but it cannot catch mice. Now if you have a big tree and are at a loss what to do with it, why not plant it in the Village of Nowhere, in the great wilds, where you might loiter idly by its side, and lie down in blissful repose beneath its shade? There it would be safe from the axe and from all other injury. For being of no use to others, what could worry its mind?"

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On Levelling All Things

Tsech'i of Nankuo sat leaning on a low table. Gazing up to heaven, he sighed and looked as though he had lost his mind.

Yench'eng Tseyu, who was standing by him, exclaimed, "What are you thinking about that your body should become thus like dead wood, your mind like burnt-out cinders? Surely the man now leaning on the table is not he who was here just now."

"My friend," replied Tsech'i, "your question is apposite. Today I have lost my Self.... Do you understand? ... Perhaps you only know the music of man, and not that of Earth. Or even if you have heard the music of Earth, perhaps you have not heard the music of Heaven."

"Pray explain," said Tseyu.

"The breath of the universe," continued Tsech'i, "is called wind. At times, it is inactive. But when active, all crevices resound to its blast. Have you never listened to its deafening roar?

"Caves and dells of hill and forest, hollows in huge trees of many a span in girth -- some are like nostrils, and some like mouths, and others like ears, beam-sockets, goblets, mortars, or like pools and puddles. And the wind goes rushing through them, like swirling torrents or singing arrows, bellowing, sousing, trilling, wailing, roaring, purling, whistling in front and echoing behind, now soft with the cool blow, now shrill with the whirlwind, until the tempest is past and silence reigns supreme. Have you never witnessed how the trees and objects shake and quake, and twist and twirl?"

"Well, then," enquired Tseyu, "since the music of Earth consists of hollows and apertures, and the music of man of pipes and flutes, of what consists the music of Heaven?"

"The effect of the wind upon these various apertures," replied Tsech'i, "is not uniform, but the sounds are produced according to their individual capacities. Who is it that agitates their breasts?

"Great wisdom is generous; petty wisdom is contentious. Great speech is impassioned, small speech cantankerous.

"For whether the soul is locked in sleep or whether in waking hours the body moves, we are striving and struggling with the immediate circumstances. Some are easy-going and leisurely, some are deep and cunning, and some are secretive. Now we are frightened over petty fears, now disheartened and dismayed over some great terror. Now the mind flies forth like an arrow from a cross-bow, to be the arbiter of right and wrong. Now it stays behind as if sworn to an oath, to hold on to what it has secured. Then, as under autumn and winter's blight, comes gradual decay, and submerged in its own occupations, it keeps on running its course, never to return. Finally, worn out and imprisoned, it is choked up like an old drain, and the failing mind shall not see light again {8}.

"Joy and anger, sorrow and happiness, worries and regrets, indecision and fears, come upon us by turns, with everchanging moods, like music from the hollows, or like mushrooms from damp. Day and night they alternate within us, but we cannot tell

whence they spring. Alas! Alas! Could we for a moment lay our finger upon their very Cause?

"But for these emotions I should not be. Yet but for me, there would be no one to feel them. So far we can go; but we do not know by whose order they come into play. It would seem there was a soul; {9} but the clue to its existence is wanting. That it functions is credible enough, though we cannot see its form. Perhaps it has inner reality without outward form.

"Take the human body with all its hundred bones, nine external cavities and six internal organs, all complete. Which part of it should I love best? Do you not cherish all equally, or have you a preference? Do these organs serve as servants of someone else? Since servants cannot govern themselves, do they serve as master and servants by turn? Surely there is some soul which controls them all.

"But whether or not we ascertain what is the true nature of this soul, it matters but little to the soul itself. For once coming into this material shape, it runs its course until it is exhausted. To be harassed by the wear and tear of life, and to be driven along without possibility of arresting one's course, -- is not this pitiful indeed? To labor without ceasing all life, and then, without living to enjoy the fruit, worn out with labor, to depart, one knows not whither, -- is not this a just cause for grief?"

"Men say there is no death -- to what avail? The body decomposes, and the mind goes with it. Is this not a great cause for sorrow? Can the world be so dull as not to see this? Or is it I alone who am dull, and others not so?"

Now if we are to be guided by our prejudices, who shall be without a guide? What need to make comparisons of right and wrong with others? And if one is to follow one's own judgments according to his prejudices, even the fools have them! But to form judgments of right and wrong without first having a mind at all is like saying, "I left for Yu:eh today, and got there yesterday." Or, it is like assuming something which does not exist to exist. The (illusions of) assuming something which does not exist to exist could not be fathomed even by the divine Yu:; how much less could we?

For speech is not mere blowing of breath. It is intended to say some thing, only what it is intended to say cannot yet be determined. Is there speech indeed, or is there not? Can we, or can we not, distinguish it from the chirping of young birds?

How can Tao be obscured so that there should be a distinction of true and false? How can speech be so obscured that there should be a distinction of right and wrong? {10} Where can you go and find Tao not to exist? Where can you go and find that words

cannot be proved? Tao is obscured by our inadequate understanding, and words are obscured by flowery expressions. Hence the affirmations and denials of the Confucian and Motsean {11} schools, each denying what the other affirms and affirming what the other denies. Each denying what the other affirms and affirming what the other denies brings us only into confusion.

There is nothing which is not this; there is nothing which is not that. What cannot be seen by what (the other person) can be known by myself. Hence I say, this emanates from that; that also derives from this. This is the theory of the interdependence of this and that (relativity of standards).

Nevertheless, life arises from death, and vice versa. Possibility arises from impossibility, and vice versa. Affirmation is based upon denial, and vice versa. Which being the case, the true sage rejects all distinctions and takes his refuge in Heaven (Nature). For one may base it on this, yet this is also that and that is also this. This also has its 'right' and 'wrong', and that also has its 'right' and 'wrong.' Does then the distinction between this and that really exist or not? When this (subjective) and that (objective) are both without their correlates, that is the very 'Axis of Tao.' And when that Axis passes through the center at which all Infinities converge, affirmations and denials alike blend into the infinite One. Hence it is said that there is nothing like using the Light.

To take a finger in illustration of a finger not being a finger is not so good as to take something which is not a finger to illustrate that a finger is not a finger. To take a horse in illustration of a horse not being a horse is not so good as to take something which is not a horse to illustrate that a horse is not a horse {12}. So with the universe which is but a finger, but a horse. The possible is possible: the impossible is impossible. Tao operates, and the given results follow; things receive names and are said to be what they are. Why are they so? They are said to be so! Why are they not so? They are said to be not so! Things are so by themselves and have possibilities by themselves. There is nothing which is not so and there is nothing which may not become so.

Therefore take, for instance, a twig and a pillar, or the ugly person and the great beauty, and all the strange and monstrous transformations. These are all levelled together by Tao. Division is the same as creation; creation is the same as destruction. There is no such thing as creation or destruction, for these conditions are again levelled together into One.

Only the truly intelligent understand this principle of the levelling of all things into One. They discard the distinctions and take refuge in the common and ordinary things. The common and ordinary things serve certain functions and therefore retain the wholeness of nature. From this wholeness, one comprehends, and

from comprehension, one to the Tao. There it stops. To stop without knowing how it stops -- this is Tao.

But to wear out one's intellect in an obstinate adherence to the individuality of things, not recognizing the fact that all things are One, -- that is called "Three in the Morning." What is "Three in the Morning?" A keeper of monkeys said with regard to their rations of nuts that each monkey was to have three in the morning and four at night. At this the monkeys were very angry. Then the keeper said they might have four in the morning and three at night, with which arrangement they were all well pleased. The actual number of nuts remained the same, but there was a difference owing to (subjective evaluations of) likes and dislikes. It also derives from this (principle of subjectivity). Wherefore the true Sage brings all the contraries together and rests in the natural Balance of Heaven. This is called (the principle of following) two courses (at once).

The knowledge of the men of old had a limit. When was the limit? It extended back to a period when matter did not exist. That was the extreme point to which their knowledge reached. The second period was that of matter, but of matter unconditioned (undefined). The third epoch saw matter conditioned (defined), but judgments of true and false were still unknown. When these appeared, Tao began to decline. And with the decline of Tao, individual bias (subjectivity) arose.

Besides, did Tao really rise and decline? {13} In the world of (apparent) rise and decline, the famous musician Chao Wen did play the string instrument; but in respect to the world without rise and decline, Chao Wen did not play the string instrument. When Chao Wen stopped playing the string instrument, Shih K'uang (the music master) laid down his drum-stick (for keeping time), and Hueitse (the sophist) stopped arguing, they all understood the approach of Tao. These people are the best in their arts, and therefore known to posterity. They each loved his art, and wanted to excel in his own line. And because they loved their arts, they wanted to make them known to others. But they were trying to teach what (in its nature) could not be known. Consequently Hueitse ended in the obscure discussions of the "hard" and "white"; and Chao Wen's son tried to learn to play the stringed instrument all his life and failed. If this may be called success, then I, too, have succeeded. But if neither of them could be said to have succeeded, then neither I nor others have succeeded. Therefore the true Sage discards the light that dazzles and takes refuge in the common and ordinary. Through this comes understanding.

Suppose here is a statement. We do not know whether it belongs to one category or another. But if we put the different categories in one, then the differences of category cease to exist. However, I

must explain. If there was a beginning, then there was a time before that beginning, and a time before the time which was before the time of that beginning. If there is existence, there must have been non-existence. And if there was a time when nothing existed, then there must have been a time when even nothing did not exist. All of a sudden, nothing came into existence. Could one then really say whether it belongs to the category of existence or of non-existence? Even the very words I have just now uttered, -- I cannot say whether they say something or not.

There is nothing under the canopy of heaven greater than the tip of a bird's down in autumn, while the T'ai Mountain is small. Neither is there any longer life than that of a child cut off in infancy, while P'eng Tsu himself died young. The universe and I came into being together; I and everything therein are One.

If then all things are One, what room is there for speech? On the other hand, since I can say the word 'one' how can speech not exist? If it does exist, we have One and speech -- two; and two and one -- three {14} from which point onwards even the best mathematicians will fail to reach (the ultimate); how much more then should ordinary people fail?

Hence, if from nothing you can proceed to something, and subsequently reach there, it follows that it would be still easier if you were to start from something. Since you cannot proceed, stop here. Now Tao by its very nature can never be defined. Speech by its very nature cannot express the absolute. Hence arise the distinctions. Such distinctions are: "right" and "left," "relationship" and "duty," "division" and "discrimination, "emulation and contention. These are called the Eight Predicables.

Beyond the limits of the external world, the Sage knows that it exists, but does not talk about it. Within the limits of the external world, the Sage talks but does not make comments. With regard to the wisdom of the ancients, as embodied in the canon of Spring and Autumn, the Sage comments, but does not expound. And thus, among distinctions made, there are distinctions that cannot be made; among things expounded, there are things that cannot be expounded.

How can that be? it is asked. The true Sage keeps his knowledge within him, while men in general set forth theirs in argument, in order to convince each other. And therefore it is said that one who argues does so because he cannot see certain points.

Now perfect Tao cannot be given a name. A perfect argument does not employ words. Perfect kindness does not concern itself with (individual acts of) kindness {15}. Perfect integrity is not critical of others {16} Perfect courage does not push itself forward.

For the Tao which is manifest is not Tao. Speech which argues falls short of its aim. Kindness which has fixed objects loses its scope. Integrity which is obvious is not believed in. Courage which pushes itself forward never accomplishes anything. These five are, as it were, round (mellow) with a strong bias towards squareness (sharpness). Therefore that knowledge which stops at what it does not know, is the highest knowledge.

Who knows the argument which can be argued without words, and the Tao which does not declare itself as Tao? He who knows this may be said to enter the realm of the spirit {17}. To be poured into without becoming full, and pour out without becoming empty, without knowing how this is brought about, -- this is the art of "Concealing the Light."

Of old, the Emperor Yao said to Shun, "I would smite the Tsungs, and the Kueis, and the Hsu:-aos. Since I have been on the throne, this has ever been on my mind. What do you think?"

"These three States," replied Shun, "lie in wild undeveloped regions. Why can you not shake off this idea? Once upon a time, ten suns came out together, and all things were illuminated thereby. How much greater should be the power of virtue which excels the suns?"

Yeh Ch'u:eh asked Wang Yi, saying, "Do you know for certain that all things are the same?"

"How can I know?" answered Wang Yi. "Do you know what you do not know?"

"How can I know!" replied Yeh Ch'u:eh. "But then does nobody know?"

"How can I know?" said Wang Yi. "Nevertheless, I will try to tell you. How can it be known that what I call knowing is not really not knowing and that what I call not knowing is not really knowing? Now I would ask you this, If a man sleeps in a damp place, he gets lumbago and dies. But how about an eel? And living up in a tree is precarious and trying to the nerves. But how about monkeys? Of the man, the eel, and the monkey, whose habitat is the right one, absolutely? Human beings feed on flesh, deer on grass, centipedes on little snakes, owls and crows on mice. Of these four, whose is the right taste, absolutely? Monkey mates with the dog-headed female ape, the buck with the doe, eels consort with fishes, while men admire Mao Ch'iang and Li Chi, at the sight of whom fishes plunge deep down in the water, birds soar high in the air, and deer hurry away. Yet who shall say which is the correct standard of beauty? In my opinion, the doctrines of humanity and justice and the paths of right and wrong are so confused that it is impossible to know their contentions."

"If you then," asked Yeh Ch'u:eh, "do not know what is good and bad, is the Perfect Man equally without this knowledge?"

"The Perfect Man," answered Wang Yi, "is a spiritual being. Were the ocean itself scorched up, he would not feel hot. Were the great rivers frozen hard, he would not feel cold. Were the mountains to be cleft by thunder, and the great deep to be thrown up by storm, he would not tremble with fear. Thus, he would mount upon the clouds of heaven, and driving the sun and the moon before him, pass beyond the limits of this mundane existence. Death and life have no more victory over him. How much less should he concern himself with the distinctions of profit and loss?"

Chu: Ch'iao addressed Ch'ang Wutse as follows: "I heard Confucius say, 'The true Sage pays no heed to worldly affairs. He neither seeks gain nor avoids injury. He asks nothing at the hands of man and does not adhere to rigid rules of conduct. Sometimes he says something without speaking and sometimes he speaks without saying anything. And so he roams beyond the limits of this mundane world.

'These,' commented Confucius, 'are futile fantasies.' But to me they are the embodiment of the most wonderful Tao. What is your opinion?"

"These are things that perplexed even the Yellow Emperor," replied Ch'ang Wutse. "How should Confucius know? You are going too far ahead. When you see a hen's egg, you already expect to hear a cock crow. When you see a sling, you are already expected to have broiled pigeon. I will say a few words to you at random, and do you listen at random.

"How does the Sage seat himself by the sun and moon, and hold the universe in his grasp? He blends everything into one harmonious whole, rejecting the confusion of this and that. Rank and precedence, which the vulgar sedulously cultivate, the Sage stolidly ignores, amalgamating the disparities of ten thousand years into one pure mold. The universe itself, too, conserves and blends all in the same manner.

"How do I know that love of life is not a delusion after all? How do I know but that he who dreads death is not as a child who has lost his way and does not know his way home?

"The Lady Li Chi was the daughter of the frontier officer of Ai. When the Duke of Chin first got her, she wept until the bosom of her dress was drenched with tears. But when she came to the royal residence, shared with the Duke his luxurious couch, and ate rich food, she repented of having wept. How then do I know but that the dead may repent of having previously clung to life?

"Those who dream of the banquet, wake to lamentation and sorrow. Those who dream of lamentation and sorrow wake to join the hunt. While they dream, they do not know that they are dreaming. Some will even interpret the very dream they are dreaming; and only when they awake do they know it was a dream. By and by comes the great awakening, and then we find out that this life is really a great dream. Fools think they are awake now, and flatter themselves they know -- this one is a prince, and that one is a shepherd. What narrowness of mind! Confucius and you are both dreams; and I who say you are dreams -- I am but a dream myself. This is a paradox. Tomorrow a Sage may arise to explain it; but that tomorrow will not be until ten thousand generations have gone by. Yet you may meet him around the corner.

"Granting that you and I argue. If you get the better of me, and not I of you, are you necessarily right and I wrong? Or if I get the better of you and not you of me, am I necessarily right and you wrong? Or are we both partly right and partly wrong? Or are we both wholly right and wholly wrong? You and I cannot know this, and consequently we all live in darkness.

"Whom shall I ask as arbiter between us? If I ask someone who takes your view, he will side with you. How can such a one arbitrate between us? If I ask someone who takes my view, he will side with me. How can such a one arbitrate between us? If I ask someone who differs from both of us, he will be equally unable to decide between us, since he differs from both of us. And if I ask someone who agrees with both of us, he will be equally unable to decide between us, since he agrees with both of us. Since then you and I and other men cannot decide, how can we depend upon another? The words of arguments are all relative; if we wish to reach the absolute, we must harmonize them by means of the unity of God, and follow their natural evolution, so that we may complete our allotted span of life.

"But what is it to harmonize them by means of the unity of God? It is this. The right may not be really right. What appears so may not be really so. Even if what is right is really right, wherein it differs from wrong cannot be made plain by argument. Even if what appears so is really so, wherein it differs from what is not so also cannot be made plain by argument.

"Take no heed of time nor of right and wrong. Passing into the realm of the Infinite, take your final rest therein."

The Penumbra said to the Umbra, "At one moment you move: at another you are at rest. At one moment you sit down: at another you get up. Why this instability of purpose?"

"Perhaps I depend," replied the Umbra, "upon something which

causes me to do as I do; and perhaps that something depends in turn upon something else which causes it to do as it does. Or perhaps my dependence is like (the unconscious movements) of a snake's scales or of a cicada's wings. How can I tell why I do one thing, or why I do not do another?"

Once upon a time, I, Chuang Chou {18}, dreamt I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither, to all intents and purposes a butterfly. I was conscious only of my happiness as a butterfly, unaware that I was Chou. Soon I awaked, and there I was, veritably myself again. Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly, dreaming I am a man. Between a man and a butterfly there is necessarily a distinction. The transition is called the transformation of material things {19}.

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The Preservation of Life

Human life is limited, but knowledge is limitless. To drive the limited in pursuit of the limitless is fatal; and to presume that one really knows is fatal indeed!

In doing good, avoid fame. In doing bad, avoid disgrace. Pursue a middle course as your principle. Thus you will guard your body from harm, preserve your life, fulfil your duties by your parents, and live your allotted span of life.

Prince Huei's cook was cutting up a bullock. Every blow of his hand, every heave of his shoulders, every tread of his foot, every thrust of his knee, every whshh of rent flesh, every chhk of the chopper, was in perfect rhythm, --like the dance of the Mulberry Grove, like the harmonious chords of Ching Shou.

"Well done!" cried the Prince. "Yours is skill indeed!"

"Sire," replied the cook laying down his chopper, "I have always devoted myself to Tao, which is higher than mere skill. When I first began to cut up bullocks, I saw before me whole bullocks. After three years' practice, I saw no more whole animals. And now I work with my mind and not with my eye. My mind works along without the control of the senses. Falling back upon eternal principles, I glide through such great joints or cavities as there may be, according to the natural constitution of the animal. I do not even touch the convolutions of muscle and tendon, still less attempt to cut through large bones.

"A good cook changes his chopper once a year, -- because he cuts. An ordinary cook, one a month, -- because he hacks. But I have had this chopper nineteen years, and although I have cut up many thousand bullocks, its edge is as if fresh from the whetstone. For at the joints there are always interstices, and the edge of a chopper being without thickness, it remains only to insert that which is without thickness into such an interstice. Indeed there is plenty of room for the blade to move about. It is thus that I have kept my chopper for nineteen years as though fresh from the whetstone.

"Nevertheless, when I come upon a knotty part which is difficult to tackle, I am all caution. Fixing my eye on it, I stay my hand, and gently apply my blade, until with a hwah the part yields like earth crumbling to the ground. Then I take out my chopper and stand up, and look around, and pause with an air of triumph. Then wiping my chopper, I put it carefully away."

"Bravo!" cried the Prince. "From the words of this cook I have learned how to take care of my life."

When Hsien, of the Kungwen family, beheld a certain official, he was horrified, and said, "Who is that man? How came he to lose a leg? Is this the work of God, or of man?"

"Why, of course, it is the work of God, and not of man," was the reply. "God made this man one-legged. The appearance of men is always balanced. From this it is clear that God and not man made him what he is."

A pheasant of the marshes may have to go ten steps to get a peck, a hundred to get a drink. Yet pheasants do not want to be fed in a cage. For although they might have less worries, they would not like it. When Laotse died, Ch'in Yi went to the funeral. He uttered three yells and departed. A disciple asked him saying, "Were you not our Master's friend?"

"I was," replied Ch'in Yi.

"And if so, do you consider that a sufficient expression of grief at his death?" added the disciple.

"I do," said Ch'in Yi. "I had thought he was a (mortal) man, but now I know that he was not. When I went in to mourn, I found old persons weeping as if for their children, young ones wailing as if for their mothers. When these people meet, they must have said words on the occasion and shed tears without any intention. (To cry thus at one's death) is to evade the natural principles (of life and death) and increase human attachments, forgetting the source from which we receive this life. The ancients called this 'evading the retribution of Heaven.' The Master came, because it was his time to be born; He went, because it was his time to go away.

Those who accept the natural course and sequence of things and live in obedience to it are beyond joy and sorrow. The ancients spoke of this as the emancipation from bondage. The fingers may not be able to supply all the fuel, but the fire is transmitted, and we know not when it will come to an end."

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This Human World

Yen huei {20} went to take leave of Confucius. "Whither are you bound?" asked the Master.

"I am going to the State of Wei," was the reply.

"And what do you propose to do there?" continued Confucius.

"I hear," answered Yen Huei, "that the Prince of Wei is of mature age, but of an unmanageable disposition. He behaves as if the people were of no account, and will not see his own faults. He disregards human lives and the people perish; and their corpses lie about like so much under growth in a marsh. The people do not know where to turn for help. And I have heard you say that if a state be well governed, it may be passed over; but that if it be badly governed, then we should visit it. At the door of physicians there are many sick people. I would test my knowledge in this sense, that perchance I may do some good at that state."

"Alas!" cried Confucius, "you will be only going to your doom. For Tao must not bustle about. If it does it will have divergent aims. From divergent aims come restlessness; from restlessness comes worry, and from worry one reaches the stage of being beyond hope. The Sages of old first strengthened their own character before they tried to strengthen that of others. Before you have strengthened your own character, what leisure have you to attend to the doings of wicked men? Besides, do you know into what virtue evaporates by motion and where knowledge ends? Virtue evaporates by motion into desire for fame and knowledge ends in contentions. In the struggle for fame men crush each other, while their wisdom but provokes rivalry. Both are instruments of evil, and are not proper principles of living.

"Besides, if before one's own solid character and integrity become an influence among men and before one's own disregard for fame reaches the hearts of men, one should go and force the preaching of charity and duty and the rules of conduct on wicked men, he would only make these men hate him for his very goodness. Such a

person may be called a messenger of evil. A messenger of evil will be the victim of evil from others. That, alas! will be your end.

"On the other hand, if the Prince loves the good and hates evil, what object will you have in inviting him to change his ways? Before you have opened your mouth, the Prince himself will have seized the opportunity to wrest the victory from you. Your eyes will be dazzled, your expression fade, your words will hedge about, your face will show confusion, and your heart will yield within you. It will be as though you took fire to quell fire, water to quell water, which is known as aggravation. And if you begin with concessions, there will be no end to them. If you neglect this sound advice and talk too much, you will die at the hands of that violent man.

"Of old, Chieh murdered Kuanlung P'ang, and Chou slew Prince Pikan. Their victims were both men who cultivated themselves and cared for the good of the people, and thus offended their superiors. Therefore, their superiors got rid of them, because of their goodness. This was the result of their love for fame.

"Of old, Yao attacked the Ts'ung-chih and Hsu:-ao countries, and Ya attacked the Yu-hus. The countries were laid waste, their inhabitants slaughtered, their rulers killed. Yet they fought without ceasing, and strove for material objects to the last. These are instances of striving for fame or for material objects. Have you not heard that even Sages cannot overcome this love of fame and this desire for material objects (in rulers)? Are you then likely to succeed? But of course you have a plan. Tell it to me."

"Gravity of demeanor and humility; persistence and singleness of purpose, -- will this do?" replied Yen Huei. "Alas, no," said Confucius, "how can it? The Prince is a haughty person, filled with pride, and his moods are fickle. No one opposes him, and so he has come to take actual pleasure in trampling upon the feelings of others. And if he has thus failed in the practice of routine virtues, do you expect that he will take readily to higher ones? He will persist in his ways, and though outwardly he may agree with you, inwardly he will not repent. How then will you make him mend his ways?"

"Why, then," (replied Yen Huei) "I can be inwardly straight, and outwardly yielding, and I shall substantiate what I say by appeals to antiquity. He who is inwardly straight is a servant of God. And he who is a servant of God knows that the Son of Heaven and himself are equally the children of God {21}. Shall then such a one trouble whether his words are approved or disapproved by man? Such a person is commonly regarded as an (innocent) child. This is to be a servant of God. He who is outwardly yielding is a servant of man. He bows, he kneels, he folds his hands -- such is the ceremonial of a minister. What all men do, shall I not do also?

What all men do, none will blame me for doing. This is to be a servant of man. He who substantiates his words by appeals to antiquity is a servant of the Sages of old. Although I utter the words of warning and take him to task, it is the Sages of old who speak, and not I. Thus I shall not receive the blame for my uprightness. This is to be the servant of the Sages of old. Will this do?"

"No! How can it?" replied Confucius. "Your plans are too many. You are firm, but lacking in prudence. However, you are only narrow minded, but you will not get into trouble; but that is all. You will still be far from influencing him because your own opinions are still too rigid."

"Then," said Yen Huei, "I can go no further. I venture to ask for a method."

Confucius said, "Keep fast, and I shall tell you. Will it be easy for you when you still have a narrow mind? He who treats things as easy will not be approved by the bright heaven."

"My family is poor," replied Yen Huei, "and for many months we have tasted neither wine nor flesh. Is that not fasting?"

"That is a fast according to the religious observances," answered Confucius, "but not the fasting of the heart."

"And may I ask," said Yen Huei, "in what consists the fasting of the heart?"

"Concentrate your will. Hear not with your ears, but with your mind; not with your mind, but with your spirit. Let your hearing stop with the ears, and let your mind stop with its images. Let your spirit, however, be like a blank, passively responsive to externals. In such open receptivity only can Tao abide. And that open receptivity is the fasting of the heart."

"Then," said Yen Huei, "the reason I could not use this method was because of consciousness of a self. If I could apply this method, the assumption of a self would have gone. Is this what you mean by the receptive state?"

"Exactly so," replied the Master. "Let me tell you. Enter this man's service, but without idea of working for fame. Talk when he is in a mood to listen, and stop when he is not. Do without any sort of labels or self- advertisements. Keep to the One and let things take their natural course. Then you may have some chance of success. It is easy to stop walking: the trouble is to walk without touching the ground. As an agent of man, it is easy to use artificial devices; but not as an agent of God. You have heard of winged creatures flying. You have never heard of flying without wings.

You have heard of men being wise with knowledge. You have never heard of men wise without knowledge "Look at that emptiness. There is brightness in an empty room. Good luck dwells in repose. If there is not (inner) repose, your mind will be galloping about though you are sitting still. Let your ears and eyes communicate within but shut out all knowledge from the mind. Then the spirits will come to dwell therein, not to mention man. This is the method for the transformation (influencing) of all Creation. It was the key to the influence of Yu and Shun, and the secret of the success of Fu Hsi and Chi Chu. How much more should the common man follow the same rule?"

[Two sections are omitted here. -- Ed.]

A certain carpenter Shih was travelling to the Ch'i State. On reaching Shady Circle, he saw a sacred li tree in the temple to the God of Earth. It was so large that its shade could cover a herd of several thousand cattle. It was a hundred spans in girth, towering up eighty feet over the hilltop, before it branched out. A dozen boats could be cut out of it. Crowds stood gazing at it, but the carpenter took no notice, and went on his way without even casting a look behind. His apprentice however took a good look at it, and when he caught up with his master, said, "Ever since I have handled an adze in your service, I have never seen such a splendid piece of timber. How was it that you, Master, did not care to stop and look at it?"

"Forget about it. It's not worth talking about," replied his master. "It's good for nothing. Made into a boat, it would sink; into a coffin, it would rot; into furniture, it would break easily; into a door, it would sweat; into a pillar, it would be worm-eaten. It is wood of no quality, and of no use. That is why it has attained its present age."

When the carpenter reached home, he dreamt that the spirit of the tree appeared to him in his sleep and spoke to him as follows: "What is it you intend to compare me with? Is it with fine-grained wood? Look at the cherry-apple, the pear, the orange, the pumelo, and other fruit bearers? As soon as their fruit ripens they are stripped and treated with indignity. The great boughs are snapped off, the small ones scattered abroad. Thus do these trees by their own value injure their own lives. They cannot fulfil their allotted span of years, but perish prematurely because they destroy themselves for the (admiration of) the world. Thus it is with all things. Moreover, I tried for a long period to be useless. Many times I was in danger of being cut down, but at length I have succeeded, and so have become exceedingly useful to myself. Had I indeed been of use, I should not be able to grow to this height. Moreover, you and I are both created things. Have done then with

this criticism of each other. Is a good-for-nothing fellow in imminent danger of death a fit person to talk of a good-for-nothing tree?" When the carpenter Shih awaked and told his dream, his apprentice said, "If the tree aimed at uselessness, how was it that it became a sacred tree?"

"Hush!" replied his master. "Keep quiet. It merely took refuge in the temple to escape from the abuse of those who do not appreciate it. Had it not become sacred, how many would have wanted to cut it down! Moreover, the means it adopts for safety is different from that of others, and to criticize it by ordinary standards would be far wide of the mark."

Tsech'i of Nan-po was travelling on the hill of Shang when he saw a large tree which astonished him very much. A thousand chariot teams of four horses could find shelter under its shade. "What tree is this?" cried Tsech'i. "Surely it must be unusually fine timber." Then looking up, he saw that its branches were too crooked for rafters; and looking down he saw that the trunk's twisting loose grain made it valueless for coffins. He tasted a leaf, but it took the skin off his lips; and its odor was so strong that it would make a man intoxicated for three days together. "Ah!" said Tsech'i, "this tree is really good for nothing, and that is how it has attained this size. A spiritual man might well follow its example of uselessness."

In the State of Sung there is a land belonging to the Chings, where thrive the catalpa, the cedar, and the mulberry. Such as are of one span or so in girth are cut down for monkey cages. Those of two or three spans are cut down for the beams of fine houses. Those of seven or eight spans are cut down for the solid (unjointed) sides of rich men's coffins. Thus they do not fulfil their allotted span of years, but perish young beneath the axe. Such is the misfortune which overtakes worth. For the sacrifices to the River God, neither bulls with white foreheads, nor pigs with high snouts, nor men suffering from piles, can be used. This is known to all the soothsayers, for these are regarded as inauspicious. The wise, however, would regard them as extremely auspicious (to themselves).

There was a hunchback named Su. His jaws touched his navel. His shoulders were higher than his head. His neck bone stuck out toward the sky. His viscera were turned upside down. His buttocks were where his ribs should have been. By tailoring, or washing, he was easily able to earn his living. By sifting rice he could make enough to support a family of ten. When orders came down for a conscription, the hunchback walked about unconcerned among the crowd. And similarly, in government conscription for public works, his deformity saved him from being called. On the other hand, when it came to government donations of grain for the disabled, the hunchback received as much as three chung and of

firewood, ten faggots. And if physical deformity was thus enough to preserve his body until the end of his days, how much more should moral and mental deformity avail!

When Confucius was in the Ch'u State, the eccentric Chieh Yu passed his door, saying, "O phoenix! O phoenix! How has thy virtue fallen! Wait not for the coming years, nor hanker back to the past. When the right principles prevail on earth, prophets will fulfil their mission. When the right principles prevail not, they will but preserve themselves. At the present day, they are but trying to keep out of jail! The good fortunes of this world are light as feathers, yet none estimates them at their true value. The misfortunes of this life are weighty as the earth, yet none knows how to keep out of their reach. No more, no more, show off your virtue. Beware, beware, move cautiously on! O brambles, O brambles, wound not my steps! I pick my way about, hurt not my feet!" {22}

The mountain trees invite their own cutting down; lamp oil invites its own burning up. Cinnamon bark can be eaten; therefore the tree is cut down. Lacquer can be used, therefore the tree is scraped. All men know the utility of useful things; but they do not know the utility of futility.

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Deformities, or Evidence of a Full Character

In the state of Lu there was a man, named Wang T'ai, who had had one of his legs cut off. His disciples were as numerous as those of Confucius. Ch'ang Chi asked Confucius, saying, "This Wang T'ai has been mutilated, yet he has as many followers in the Lu State as you. He neither stands up to preach nor sits down to give discourse; yet those who go to him empty, depart full. Is he the kind of person who can teach without words and influence people's minds without material means? What manner of man is this?"

"He is a sage," replied Confucius, "I wanted to go to him, but am merely behind the others. Even I will go and make him my teacher, -- why not those who are lesser than I? And I will lead, not only the State of Lu, but the whole world to follow him."

"The man has been mutilated," said Ch'ang Chi, "and yet people call him 'Master.' He must be very different from the ordinary men. If so, how does he train his mind?"

"Life and Death are indeed changes of great moment," answered

Confucius, "but they cannot affect his mind. Heaven and earth may collapse, but his mind will remain. Being indeed without flaw, it will not share the fate of all things. It can control the transformation of things, while preserving its source intact."

"How so?" asked Ch'ang Chi. "From the point of view of differentiation of things," replied Confucius, "we distinguish between the liver and the gall, between the Ch'u State and the Yueh State. From the point of view of their sameness, all things are One. He who regards things in this light does not even trouble about what reaches him through the senses of hearing and sight, but lets his mind wander in the moral harmony of things. He beholds the unity in things, and does not notice the loss of particular objects. And thus the loss of his leg is to him as would be the loss of so much dirt."

"But he cultivates only himself," said Ch'ang Chi. "He uses his knowledge to perfect his mind, and develops his mind into the Absolute Mind. But how is it that people flock around him?"

"A man," replied Confucius, "does not seek to see himself in running water, but in still water. For only what is itself still can instill stillness into others. The grace of earth has reached only the pines and cedars; winter and summer alike, they are green. The grace of God has reached to Yao and to Shun, who alone attained rectitude. Happily he was able to rectify himself and thus become the means through which all were rectified. For the possession of one's original (nature) is evidenced in true courage.

A man will, single-handed, brave a whole army. And if such a result can be achieved by one in search of fame through self control, how much greater courage can be shown by one who extends his sway over heaven and earth and gives shelter to all things, who, lodging temporarily within the confines of a body with contempt for the superficialities of sight and sound, brings his knowledge to level all knowledge and whose mind never dies! Besides, he (Wang T'ai) is only awaiting his appointed hour to go up to Heaven. Men indeed flock to him of their own accord. How can he take seriously the affairs of this world?"

Shent'u Chia had only one leg. He studied under Pohun Wujen (Muddle-Head No-Such-Person") together with Tsech'an {24} of the Cheng State. The latter said to him, "When I leave first, do you remain behind. When you leave first, I will remain behind." Next day, when they were again together sitting on the same mat in the lecture-room, Tsech'an said, "When I leave first, do you remain behind. Or if you leave first, I will remain behind. I am now about to go. Will you remain or not? I notice you show no respect to a high personage. Perhaps you think yourself my equal?"

"In the house of the Master," replied Shent'u Chia, "there is already a high personage (the Master). Perhaps you think that you are the high personage and therefore should take precedence over the rest. Now I have heard that if a mirror is perfectly bright, dust will not collect on it, and that if it does, the mirror is no longer bright. He who associates for long with the wise should be without fault. Now you have been seeking the greater things at the feet of our Master, yet you can utter words like these. Don't you think you are making a mistake?"

"You are already mutilated like this." retorted Tsech'an, "yet you are still seeking to compete in virtue with Yao. To look at you, I should say you had enough to do to reflect on your past misdeeds!"

"Those who cover up their sins," said Shent'u Chia, "so as not to lose their legs, are many in number. Those who forget to cover up their misdemeanors and so lose their legs (through punishment) are few. But only the virtuous man can recognize the inevitable and remain unmoved. People who walked in front of the bull's-eye when Hou Yi (the famous archer) was shooting, would be hit. Some who were not hit were just lucky. There are many people with sound legs who laugh at me for not having them. This used to make me angry. But since I came to study under our Master, I have stopped worrying about it. Perhaps our Master has so far succeeded in washing (purifying) me with his goodness. At any rate, I have been with him nineteen years without being aware of my deformity. Now you and I are roaming in the realm of the spiritual, and you are judging me in the realm of the physical. {25} Are you not committing a mistake?" At this Tsech'an began to fidget and his countenance changed, and he bade Shent'u Chia to speak no more.

There was a man of the Lu State who had been mutilated, by the name of Shushan No-toes. He came walking on his heels to see Confucius; but Confucius said, "You were careless, and so brought this misfortune upon yourself. What is the use of coming to me now?" "It was because I was inexperienced and careless with my body that I hurt my feet," replied No-toes. "Now I have come with something more precious than feet, and it is that which I am seeking to preserve. There is no man, but Heaven shelters him; and there is no man, but the Earth supports him. I thought that you, Master, would be like Heaven and Earth. I little expected to hear these words from you."

"Pardon my stupidity," said Confucius. "Why not come in? I shall discuss with you what I have learned." But No-toes left. When No-toes had left, Confucius said to his disciples, "Take a good lesson. No-toes is one-legged, yet he is seeking to learn in order to make atonement for his previous misdeeds. How much more should those who have no misdeeds for which to atone?"

No-toes went off to see Lao Tan (Laotse) and said, "Is Confucius a Perfect One or is he not quite? How is it that he is so anxious to learn from you? He is seeking to earn a reputation by his abstruse and strange learning, which is regarded by the Perfect One as mere fetters."

"Why do you not make him regard life and death, and possibility and impossibility as alternations of one and the same principle," answered Lao Tan, "and so release him from these fetters?"

"It is God who has thus punished him," replied No-toes. "How could he be released?"

Duke Ai of the Lu State said to Confucius, "In the Wei State there is an ugly person, named Ait'ai (Ugly) T'o. The men who have lived with him cannot stop thinking about him. Women who have seen him, would say to their parents, 'Rather than be another man's wife, I would be this man's concubine.' There are scores of such women. He never tries to lead others, but only follows them. He wields no power of a ruler by which he may protect men's lives. He has no hoarded wealth by which to gratify their bellies, and is besides frightfully loathsome. He follows but does not lead, and his name is not known outside his own State. Yet men and women alike all seek his company. So there must be some thing in him that is different from other people. I sent for him, and saw that he was indeed frightfully ugly. Yet we had not been many months together before I began to see there was something in this man. A year had not passed before I began to trust him. As my State wanted a Prime Minister, I offered him the post. He looked sullenly before he replied and appeared as if he would much rather have declined. Perhaps he did not think me good enough for him! At any rate, I gave the post to him; but in a very short time he left me and went away. I grieved for him as for a lost friend, as though there were none left with whom I could enjoy having my kingdom. What manner of man is this?"

"When I was on a mission to the Ch'u State," replied Confucius, "I saw a litter of young pigs sucking their dead mother. After a while they looked at her, and then all left the body and went off. For their mother did not look at them any more, nor did she seem any more to have been of their kind. What they loved was their mother; not the body which contained her, but that which made the body what it was. When a man is killed in battle, his coffin is not covered with a square canopy. A man whose leg has been cut off does not value a present of shoes. In each case, the original purpose of such things is gone. The concubines of the Son of Heaven do not cut their nails or pierce their ears. Those (servants) who are married have to live outside (the palace) and cannot be employed again. Such is the importance attached to preserving the body whole. How much more valued is one who has preserved his

virtue whole? "Now Ugly T'o has said nothing and is already trusted. He has achieved nothing and is sought after, and is offered the government of a country with the only fear that he might decline. Indeed he must be the one whose talents are perfect and whose virtue is without outward form!"

What do you mean by his talents being perfect?" asked the Duke. Life and Death, ' replied Confucius, "possession and loss, success and failure, poverty and wealth, virtue and vice, good and evil report hunger and thirst, heat and cold -- these are changes of things in the natural course of events. Day and night they follow upon one another, and no man can say where they spring from. Therefore they must not be allowed to disturb the natural harmony, nor enter into the soul's domain. One should live so that one is at ease and in harmony with the world, without loss of happiness, and by day and by night, share the (peace of) spring with the created things. Thus continuously one creates the seasons in one's own breast. Such a person may be said to have perfect talents."

"And what is virtue without outward form?"

"When standing still," said Confucius, "the water is in the most perfect state of repose. Let that be your model. It remains quietly within, and is not agitated without. It is from the cultivation of such harmony that virtue results. And if virtue takes no outward form, man will not be able to keep aloof from it."

Some days afterwards Duke Ai told Mintse saying, "When first I took over the reins of government, I thought that in guiding the people and caring for their lives, I had done all my duty as a ruler. But now that I have heard the words of a perfect man, I fear that I have not achieved it, but am foolishly squandering my bodily energy and bringing ruin to my country. Confucius and I are not prince and minister, but friends in spirit.'

Hunchback-Deformed-No-Lips spoke with Duke Ling of Wei and the Duke took a fancy to him. As for the well- formed men, he thought their necks were too scraggy. Big-Jar-Goiter spoke with Duke Huan of Ch'i, and the Duke took a fancy to him. As for the well-formed men, he thought their necks were too scraggy. Thus it is that when virtue excels, the outward form is forgotten. But mankind forgets not that which is to be forgotten, forgetting that which is not to be forgotten. This is forgetfulness indeed!

And thus the Sage sets his spirit free, while knowledge is regarded as extraneous growths - agreements are for cementing relationships, goods are only for social dealings, and the handicrafts are only for serving commerce. For the Sage does not contrive, and therefore has no use for knowledge; he does not cut up the world, and therefore requires no cementing of

relationships; he has no loss, and therefore has no need to acquire; he sells nothing, and therefore has no use for commerce. These four qualifications are bestowed upon him by God, that is to say, he is fed by God. And he who is thus fed by God has little need to be fed by man.

He wears the human form without human passions. Because he wears the human form he associates with men. Because he has not human passions the questions of right and wrong do not touch him. Infinitesimal indeed is that which belongs to the human; infinitely great is that which is completed in God.

Hueitse said to Chuangtse, "Do men indeed originally have no passions?"

"Certainly," replied Chuangtse.

"But if a man has no passions," argued Hueitse, "what is it that makes him a man?"

"Tao," replied Chuangtse, "gives him his expressions, and God gives him his form. How should he not be a man?"

"If then he is a man," said Hueitse, "how can he be without passions?"

"Right and wrong (approval and disapproval)," answered Chuangtse, "are what I mean by passions. By a man without passions I mean one who does not permit likes and dislikes to disturb his internal economy, but rather falls in line with nature and does not try to improve upon (the materials of) living."

"But how is a man to live this bodily life," asked Hueitse.

"He does not try to improve upon (the materials of) his living?"

"Tao gives him his expression," said Chuangtse, "and God gives him his form. He should not permit likes and dislikes to disturb his internal economy. But now you are devoting your intelligence to externals, and wearing out your vital spirit. Lean against a tree and sing; or sit against a table and sleep! God has made you a shapely sight, yet your only thought is the hard and white." {26}

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The Great Supreme

He who knows what is of God and who knows what is of Man has

reached indeed the height (of wisdom). One who knows what is of God patterns his living after God. One who knows what is of Man may still use his knowledge of the known to develop his knowledge of the unknown, living till the end of his days and not perishing young. This is the fullness of knowledge. Herein, however, there is a flaw. Correct knowledge is dependent on objects, but the objects of knowledge are relative and uncertain (changing). How can one know that the natural is not really of man, and what is of man is not really natural? We must, moreover, have true men before we can have true knowledge.

But what is a true man? The true men of old did not override the weak, did not attain their ends by brute strength, and did not gather around them counsellors. Thus, failing they had no cause for regret; succeeding, no cause for self-satisfaction. And thus they could scale heights without trembling, enter water without becoming wet, and go through fire without feeling hot. That is the kind of knowledge which reaches to the depths of Tao.

The true men of old slept without dreams and waked up without worries. They ate with indifference to flavour, and drew deep breaths. For true men draw breath from their heels, the vulgar only from their throats. Out of the crooked, words are retched up like vomit. When man's attachments are deep, their divine endowments are shallow.

The true men of old did not know what it was to love life or to hate death. They did not rejoice in birth, nor strive to put off dissolution. Unconcerned they came and unconcerned they went. That was all. They did not forget whence it was they had sprung, neither did they seek to inquire their return thither. Cheerfully they accepted life, waiting patiently for their restoration (the end). This is what is called not to lead the heart astray from Tao, and not to supplement the natural by human means. Such a one may be called a true man. Such men are free in mind and calm in demeanor, with high fore heads. Sometimes disconsolate like autumn, and sometimes warm like spring, their joys and sorrows are in direct touch with the four seasons in harmony with all creation, and none know the limit thereof. And so it is that when the Sage wages war, he can destroy a kingdom and yet not lose the affection of the people; he spreads blessing upon all things, but it is not due to his (conscious) love of fellow men. Therefore he who delights in understanding the material world is not a Sage. He who has personal attachments is not humane. He who calculates the time of his actions is not wise. He who does not know the interaction of benefit and harm is not a superior man. He who pursues fame at the risk of losing his self is not a scholar. He who loses his life and is not true to himself can never be a master of man. Thus Hu Puhsieh, Wu Kuang, Po Yi, Shu Chi, Chi Tse, Hsu Yu, Chi T'o, and Shent'u Ti, were the servants of rulers, and did

the behests of others, not their own. {27}

The true men of old appeared of towering stature and yet could not topple down. They behaved as though wanting in themselves, but without looking up to others. Naturally independent of mind, they were not severe. Living in unconstrained freedom, yet they did not try to show off. They appeared to smile as if pleased, and to move only in natural response to surroundings. Their serenity flowed from the store of goodness within. In social relationships, they kept to their inner character. Broad-minded, they appeared great; towering, they seemed beyond control. Continuously abiding, they seemed like doors kept shut; absent-minded, they seemed to forget speech. They saw in penal laws an outward form; in social ceremonies, certain means; in knowledge, tools of expediency; in morality, a guide. It was for this reason that for them penal laws meant a merciful administration; social ceremonies, a means to get along with the world; knowledge a help for doing what they could not avoid; and morality, a guide that they might walk along with others to reach a hill. <<28>> And all men really thought that they were at pains to make their lives correct.

For what they cared for was ONE, and what they did not care for was ONE also. That which they regarded as ONE was ONE, and that which they did not regard as ONE was ONE likewise. In that which was ONE, they were of God; in that which was not ONE, they were of man. And so between the human and the divine no conflict ensued. This was to be a true man.

Life and Death are a part of Destiny. Their sequence, like day and night, is of God, beyond the interference of man. These all lie in the inevitable nature of things. He simply looks upon God as his father; if he loves him with what is born of the body, shall he not love him also with that which is greater than the body? A man looks upon a ruler of men as one superior to himself; if he is willing to sacrifice his body (for his ruler), shall he not then offer his pure (spirit) also?

When the pond dries up and the fishes are left upon the dry ground, rather than leave them to moisten each other with their damp and spittle it would be far better to let them forget themselves in their native rivers - and lakes. And it would be better than praising Yao and blaming Chieh to forget both (the good and bad) and lose oneself in Tao.

The Great (universe) gives me this form, this toil in manhood, this repose in old age, this rest in death. And surely that which is such a kind arbiter of my life is the best arbiter of my death.

A boat may be hidden in a creek, or concealed in a bog, which is generally considered safe. But at midnight a strong man may come

and carry it away on his back. Those dull of understanding do not perceive that however you conceal small things in larger ones, there will always be a chance of losing them. But if you entrust that which belongs to the universe to the whole universe, from it there will be no escape. For this is the great law of things.

To have been cast in this human form is to us already a source of joy. How much greater joy beyond our conception to know that that which is now in human form may undergo countless transitions, with only the infinite to look forward to? Therefore it is that the Sage rejoices in that which can never be lost, but endures always. For if we emulate those who can accept graciously long age or short life and the vicissitudes of events, how much more that which informs all creation on which all changing phenomena depend?

For Tao has its inner reality and its evidences. It is devoid of action and of form. It may be transmitted, but cannot be received; It may be obtained, but cannot be seen. It is based in itself, rooted in itself. Before heaven and earth were, Tao existed by itself from all time. It gave the spirits and rulers their spiritual powers, and gave Heaven and Earth their birth. To Tao, the zenith is not high, nor the nadir low; no point in time is long ago, nor by the lapse of ages has it grown old.

Hsi Wei obtained Tao, and so set the universe in order. Fu Hsi {29} obtained it, and was able to steal the secrets of eternal principles. The Great Bear obtained it, and has never erred from its course. The sun and moon obtained it, and have never ceased to revolve. K'an P'i {30} obtained it, and made his abode in the K'unlun mountains. P'ing I {31} obtained it, and rules over the streams. Chien Wu {32} obtained it, and dwells on Mount T'ai. The Yellow Emperor {33} obtained it, and soared upon the clouds to heaven. Chuan Hsu {34} obtained it, and dwells in the Dark Palace. Yu Ch'iang {35} obtained it, and established himself at the North Pole. The Western (Fairy) Queen Mother obtained it, and settled at Shao Kuang, since when and until when, no one knows. P'eng Tsu obtained it, and lived from the time of Shun until the time of the Five Princes. Fu Yueh obtained it, and as the Minister of Wu Ting {36} extended his rule to the whole empire. And now, charioted upon the Tungwei (one constellation) and drawn by the Chiwei (another constellation), he has taken his station among the stars of heaven.

Nanpo Tsek'uei said to Nu: Yu (or Female Yu), "You are of a high age, and yet you have a child's complexion. How is this?" Nu: Yu replied, "I have learned Tao."

"Could I get Tao by studying it?" asked the other. "No! How can you?" said Nu: Yu. "You are not the type of person. There was Puliang I. He had all the mental talents of a sage, but not Tao of

the sage. Now I had Tao, though not those talents. But do you think I was able to teach him to become indeed a sage? Had it been so, then to teach Tao to one who has a sage's talents would be an easy matter. It was not so, for I had to wait patiently to reveal it to him. In three days, he could transcend this mundane world. Again I waited for seven days more, then he could transcend all material existence. After he could transcend all material existence, I waited for another nine days, after which he could transcend all life. After he could transcend all life, then he had the clear vision of the morning, and after that, was able to see the Solitary (One). After seeing the Solitary, he could abolish the distinctions of past and present. After abolishing the past and present, he was able to enter there where life and death are no more, where killing does not take away life, nor does giving birth add to it. He was ever in accord with the exigencies of his environment, accepting all and welcoming all, regarding everything as destroyed, and everything as in completion. This is to be 'secure amidst confusion,' reaching security through chaos."

"Where did you learn this from?" asked Nanpo Tsek'uei. "I learned it from the Son of Ink," replied Nu Yu, "and the Son of Ink learned it from the Grandson of Learning, the Grandson of Learning from Understanding, and Understanding from Insight, Insight learned it from Practice, Practice from Folk Song, and Folk Song from Silence, Silence from the Void, and the Void learned it from the Seeming Beginning."

Four men: Tsesze, Tseyu, Tseli, and Tselai, were conversing together, saying, "Whoever can make Not-being the head, Life the backbone, and Death the tail, and whoever realizes that death and life and being and non-being are of one body, that man shall be admitted to friendship with us." The four looked at each other and smiled, and completely understanding one another, became friends accordingly. By-and-by, Tseyu fell ill, and Tsesze went to see him. "Verily the Creator is great!" said the sick man. "See how He has doubled me up." His back was so hunched that his viscera were at the top of his body. His cheeks were level with his navel, and his shoulders were higher than his neck. His neck bone pointed up towards the sky. The whole economy of his organism was deranged, but his mind was calm as ever. He dragged himself to a well, and said, "Alas, that God should have doubled me up like this!"

"Do you dislike it?" asked Tsesze. " No, why should l?" replied Tseyu. "If my left arm should become a cock, I should be able to herald the dawn with it. If my right arm should become a sling, I should be able to shoot down a bird to broil with it. If my buttocks should become wheels, and my spirit become a horse, I should be able to ride in it -- what need would I have of a chariot? I obtained life because it was my time, and I am now parting with it in

accordance with Tao. Content with the coming of things in their time and living in accord with Tao, joy and sorrow touch me not. This is, according to the ancients, to be freed from bondage. Those who cannot be freed from bondage are so because they are bound by the trammels of material existence. But man has ever given way before God; why, then, should I dislike it?"

By-and-by, Tselai fell ill, and lay gasping for breath, while his family stood weeping around. Tseli went to see him, and cried to the wife and children: "Go away! You are impeding his dissolution." Then, leaning against the door, he said, "Verily, God is great! I wonder what He will make of you now, and whither He will send you. Do you think he will make you into a rat's liver or into an insect leg?"

"A son," answered Tselai, "must go whithersoever his parents bid him, East, West, North, or South. Yin and Yang are no other than a man's parents. If Yin and Yang bid me die quickly, and I demur, then the fault is mine, not theirs. The Great (universe) gives me this form, this toil in manhood, this repose in old age, this rest in death. Surely that which is such a kind arbiter of my life is the best arbiter of my death.

"Suppose that the boiling metal in a smelting-pot were to bubble up and say, 'Make of me a Moyeh!' {37} think the master caster would reject that metal as uncanny. And if simply because I am cast into a human form, I were to say, 'Only a man! only a man!' I think the Creator too would reject me as uncanny. If I regard the universe as the smelting pot, and the Creator as the Master Caster, how should I worry wherever I am sent?" Then he sank into a peaceful sleep and waked up very much alive.

Tsesang Hu, Mengtse Fan, and Tsech'in Chang, were conversing together, saying, "Who can live together as if they did not live together? Who can help each other as if they did not help each other? Who can mount to heaven, and roaming through the clouds, leap about to the Ultimate Infinite, oblivious of existence, for ever and ever without end?" The three looked at each other and smiled with a perfect understanding and became friends accordingly. Shortly afterwards, Tsesang Hu died, whereupon Confucius sent Tsekung to attend the mourning. But Tsekung found that one of his friends was arranging the cocoon sheets and the other was playing stringed instruments and (both were) singing together as follows:

> **"Oh! come back to us, Sang Hu,**
> **Oh! come back to us, Sang Hu,**
> **Thou hast already returned to thy true state,**
> **While we still remain here as men! Oh!"**

Tsekung hurried in and said, "How can you sing in the presence of

a corpse? Is this good manners?"

The two men looked at each other and laughed, saying, "What should this man know about the meaning of good manners indeed?"

Tsekung went back and told Confucius, asking him, "What manner of men are these? Their object is to cultivate nothingness and that which lies beyond their corporeal frames. They can sit near a corpse and sing, unmoved. There is no name for such persons. What manner of men are they?"

"These men,'' replied Confucius, "play about beyond the material things; I play about within them. Consequently, our paths do not meet, and I was stupid to have sent you to mourn. They consider themselves as companions of the Creator, and play about within the One Spirit of the universe. They look upon life as a huge goiter or excrescence, and upon death as the breaking of a tumor. How could such people be concerned about the coming of life and death or their sequence? They borrow their forms from the different elements, and take temporary abode in the common forms, unconscious of their internal organs and oblivious of their senses of hearing and vision. They go through life backwards and forwards as in a circle without beginning or end, strolling forgetfully beyond the dust and dirt of mortality, and playing about with the affairs of inaction. How should such men bustle about the conventionalities of this world, for the people to look at?"

"But if such is the case," said Tsekung, "which world (the corporeal or the spiritual) would you follow?"

"I am one condemned by God," replied Confucius. "Nevertheless, I will share with you (what I know)."

"May I ask what is your method?" asked Tsekung "Fishes live their full life in water. Men live their full life in Tao," replied Confucius. "Those that live their full li& in water thrive in ponds. Those that live their full life in Tao achieve realization of their nature in inaction. Hence the saying 'Fish lose themselves (are happy) in water; man loses himself (is happy) in Tao.' " "May I ask," said Tsekung, "about (those) strange people?"

"(Those) strange people," replied Confucius, "are strange in the eyes of man, but normal in the eyes of God. Hence the saying that the meanest thing in heaven would be the best on earth; and the best on earth, the meanest in heaven.

Yen Huei said to Chungni <<38>> (Confucius), "When Mengsun Ts'ai's mother died, he wept, but without snivelling; his heart was not grieved; he wore mourning but without sorrow. Yet although

wanting in these three points, he is considered the best mourner in the State of Lu. Can there be really people with a hollow reputation? I am astonished."

"Mr. Mengsun," said Chungni, "has really mastered (the Tao). He has gone beyond the wise ones. There are still certain things he cannot quite give up, but he has already given up some things. Mr. Mengsun knows not whence we come in life nor whither we go in death. He knows not which to put first and which to put last. He is ready to be transformed into other things without caring into what he may be transformed -- that is all. How could that which is changing say that it will not change, and how could that which regards itself as permanent realize that it is changing already? Even you and I are perhaps dreamers who have not yet awakened. Moreover, he knows his form is subject to change, but his mind remains the same. He believes not in real death, but regards it as moving into a new house. He weeps only when he sees others weep, as it comes to him naturally.

"Besides, we all talk of 'me.' How do you know what is this 'me' that we speak of? You dream you are a bird, and soar to heaven, or dream you are a fish, and dive into the ocean's depths. And you cannot tell whether the man now speaking is awake or in a dream. "A man feels a pleasurable sensation before he smiles, and smiles before he thinks how he ought to smile. Resign yourself to the sequence of things, forgetting the changes of life, and you shall enter into the pure, the divine, the One."

Yi-erh-tse went to see Hsu Yu. The latter asked him, saying, "What have you learned from Yao?"

"He bade me," replied the former, "practice charity and do my duty, and distinguish clearly between right and wrong."

"Then what do you want here?" said Hsu Yu. "If Yao has already branded you with charity of heart and duty, and cut off your nose with right and wrong, what are you doing here in this free-and-easy, unfettered, take-what- comes neighborhood?"

"Nevertheless," replied Yi-erh-tse. "I should like to loiter on its confines."

"If a man has lost his eyes," retorted Hsu Yu, "it is impossible for him to join in the appreciation of beauty of face and complexion or to tell a blue sacrificial robe from a yellow one."

"Wu Chuang's (No-Decorum's) disregard of her beauty," answered Yi-erh-tse, "Chu Liang's disregard of his strength, the Yellow Emperor's abandonment of his wisdom, --all these came from a process of purging and purification. And how do you know but that the Creator would rid me of my brandings, and give me a

new nose, and make me fit to become a disciple of yourself?"

"Ah!" replied Hsu Yu, "that cannot be known. But I will give you an outline. Ah! my Master, my Master! He trims down all created things, and does not account it justice. He causes all created things to thrive and does not account it kindness. Dating back further than the remotest antiquity, He does not account himself old. Covering heaven, supporting earth, and fashioning the various forms of things, He does not account himself skilled. It is Him you should seek."

Yen Huei spoke to Chungni (Confucius), "I am getting on."

"How so?" asked the latter.

"I have got rid of charity and duty," replied the former.

"Very good," replied Chungni, "but not quite perfect."

Another day, Yen Huei met Chungni and said, "I am getting on.

"How so?"

"I have got rid of ceremonies and music," answered Yen Huei.

"Very good," said Chungni, "but not quite perfect."

Another day, Yen Huei again met Chungni and said, "I am getting on.

"How so?"

"I can forget myself while sitting," replied Yen Huei.

"What do you mean by that?" said Chungni, changing his countenance.

"I have freed myself from my body," answered Yen Huei. I have discarded my reasoning powers. And by thus getting rid of my body and mind, I have become One with the Infinite. This is what I mean by forgetting myself while sitting."

"If you have become One," said Chungni, "there can be no room for bias. If you have lost yourself, there can be no more hindrance. Perhaps you are really a wise one. I trust to be allowed to follow in your steps.

Tseyu and Tsesang were friends. Once when it had rained for ten days, Tseyu said, "Tsesang is probably ill." So he packed up some food and went to see him. Arriving at the door, he heard something between singing and weeping, accompanied with the sound of a stringed instrument, as follows: "O Father! O mother!

Is this due to God? Is this due to man?" It was as if his voice was broken and his words faltered Whereupon Tseyu went in and asked, "Why are you singing in such manner?"

"I was trying to think who could have brought me to this extreme," replied Tsesang, "but I could not guess it. My father and mother would hardly wish me to be poor. Heaven covers all equally Earth supports all equally. How can they make me in particular so poor? I was seeking to find out who was responsible for this, but without success. Surely then I am brought to this extreme by Destiny."

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Joined Toes

Joined toes and extra fingers seem to come from nature, yet, functionally speaking they are superfluous. Goiters and tumors seem to come from the body, yet in their nature, they are superfluous. And (similarly), to have many extraneous doctrines of charity and duty and regard them in practice as parts of a man's natural sentiments is not the true way of Tao. For just as joined toes are but useless lumps of flesh, and extra fingers but useless growths, so are the many artificial developments of the natural sentiments of men and the extravagances of charitable and dutiful conduct but so many superfluous uses of intelligence. People with superfluous keenness of vision put into confusion the five colors, lose themselves in the forms and designs, and in the distinctions of greens and yellows for sacrificial robcs. Is this not so? Of such was Li Chu (the clear-sighted). People with superfluous keenness of hearing put into confusion the five notes, exaggerate the tonic differences of the six pitch-pipes, and the various timbres of metal, stone, silk, and bamboo of the Huang-chung, and the Ta-lu. {39} Is this not so? Of such was Shih K'uang (the music master). People who abnormally develop charity exalt virtue and suppress nature in order to gain a reputation, make the world noisy with their discussions and cause it to follow impractical doctrines. Is this not so? Of such were Tseng and Shih. {40} People who commit excess in arguments, like piling up bricks and making knots, analyzing and inquiring into the distinctions of hard and white, identities and differences, wear themselves out over mere vain, useless terms. Is this not so? Of such were Yang and Mo {41}. All these are superfluous and devious growths of knowledge and are not the correct guide for the world. He who would be the ultimate guide never loses sight of the inner nature of life. Therefore with him, the united is not like joined toes, the separated is not like extra fingers, what is long is not considered as excess, and what is short

is not regarded as wanting. For duck's legs, though short, cannot be lengthened without dismay to the duck, and a crane's legs, though long, cannot be shortened without misery to the crane. That which is long in nature must not be cut off, and that which is short in nature must not be lengthened. Thus will all sorrow be avoided. I suppose charity and duty are surely not included in human nature. You see how many worries and dismays the charitable man has! Besides, divide your joined toes and you will howl: bite off your extra finger and you will scream. In the one case, there is too much, and in the other too little; but the worries and dismays are the same. Now the charitable men of the present age go about with a look of concern sorrowing over the ills of the age, while the non-charitable let loose the desire of their nature in their greed after position and wealth. Therefore I Suppose charity and duty are not included in human nature. Yet from the time of the Three Dynasties downwards what a commotion has been raised about them! Moreover, those who rely upon the arc, the line, compasses, and the square to make correct forms injure the natural constitution of things Those who use cords to bind and glue to piece together interfere with the natural character of things. Those who seek to satisfy the mind of man by hampering it with ceremonies and music and affecting charity and devotion have lost their original nature. There is an original nature in things. Things in their original nature are curved without the help of arcs, straight without lines, round without compasses, and rectangular without squares; they are joined together without glue. and hold together without cords. In this manner all things live and grow from an inner urge and none can tell how they come to do so. They all have a place in the scheme of things and none can tell how they come to have their proper place. From time immemorial this has always been so, and it may not be tampered with. Why then should the doctrines of charity and duty continue to remain like so much glue or cords, in the domain of Tao and virtue, to give rise to confusion and doubt among mankind? Now the lesser doubts change man's purpose, and the greater doubts change man's nature. How do we know this? Ever since the time when Shun made a bid for charity and duty and threw the world into confusion, men have run about and exhausted themselves in the pursuit thereof. Is it not then charity and duty which have changed the nature of man? Therefore I have tried to show {42} that from the time of the Three Dynasties onwards, there is not one who has not changed his nature through certain external things. If a common man, he will die for gain. If a scholar, he will die for fame. If a ruler of a township, he will die for his ancestral honors. If a Sage, he will die for the world. The pursuits and ambitions of these men differ, but the injury to their nature resulting in the sacrifice of their lives is the same. Tsang and Ku were shepherds, and both lost their sheep. On inquiry it appeared that Tsang had been engaged in reading with a shepherd's stick under his arm, while Ku had gone to take part in some trials of

strength. Their pursuits were different, but the result in each case was the loss of the sheep. Po Yi died for fame at the foot of Mount Shouyang. {43} Robber Cheh died for gain on the Mount Tungling. They died for different reasons, but the injury to their lives and nature was in each case the same. Why then must we applaud the former and blame the latter? All men die for something, and yet if a man dies for charity and duty the world calls him a gentleman; but if he dies for gain, the world calls him a low fellow. The dying being the same, one is nevertheless called a gentleman and the other called a low character. But in point of injury to their lives and nature, Robber Cheh was just another Po Yi. Of what use then is the distinction of 'gentleman' and 'low fellow' between them? Besides, were a man to apply himself to charity and duty until he were the equal of Tseng or Shih, I would not call it good. Or to savors, until he were the equal of Shu Erh (famous cook), I would not call it good. Or to sound, until he were the equal of Shih K'uang, I would not call it good. Or to colors, until he were the equal of Li Chu, I would not call it good. What I call good is not what is meant by charity and duty, but taking good care of virtue. And what I call good is not the so-called charity and duty, but following the nature of life. What I call good at hearing is not hearing others but hearing oneself. What I call good at vision is not seeing others but seeing oneself. For a man who sees not himself but others, or takes possession not of himself but of others, possessing only what others possess and possessing not his own self, does what pleases others instead of pleasing his own nature. Now one who pleases others, instead of pleasing one's own nature, whether he be Robber Cheh or Po Yi, is just another one gone astray. Conscious of my own deficiencies in regard to Tao, I do not venture to practise the principles of charity and duty on the one hand, nor to lead the life of extravagance on the other.

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Horses' Hooves

Horses have hooves to carry them over frost and snow, and hair to protect them from wind and cold. They eat grass and drink water, and fling up their tails and gallop. Such is the real nature of horses. Ceremonial halls and big dwellings are of no use to them. One day Polo (famous horse-trainer), {44} appeared, saying, "I am good at managing horses." So he burned their hair and clipped them, and pared their hooves and branded them. He put halters around their necks and shackles around their legs and numbered them according to their stables. The result was that two or three in every ten died. Then he kept them hungry and thirsty, trotting

them and galloping them, and taught them to run in formations, with the misery of the tasselled bridle in front and the fear of the knotted whip behind, until more than half of them died. The potter says, "I am good at managing clay. If I want it round, I use compasses; if rectangular, a square." The carpenter says, "I am good at managing wood. If I want it curved, I use an arc; if straight, a line." But on what grounds can we think that the nature of clay and wood desires this application of compasses and square, and arc and line? Nevertheless, every age extols Polo for his skill in training horses, and potters and carpenters for their skill with clay and wood. Those who manage (govern) the affairs of the empire make the same mistake. I think one who knows how to govern the empire should not do so. For the people have certain natural instincts -- to weave and clothe themselves, to till the fields and feed themselves. This is their common character, in which all share. Such instincts may be called "Heaven born." So in the days of perfect nature, men were quiet in their movements and serene in their looks. At that time, there were no paths over mountains, no boats or bridges over waters. All things were produced each in its natural district. Birds and beasts multiplied; trees and shrubs thrived. Thus it was that birds and beasts could be led by the hand, and one could climb up and peep into the magpie's nest. For in the days of perfect nature, man lived together with birds and beasts, and there was no distinction of their kind. Who could know of the distinctions between gentlemen and common people? Being all equally without knowledge, their virtue could not go astray. Being all equally without desires, they were in a state of natural integrity. In this state of natural integrity, the people did not lose their (original) nature. And then when Sages appeared, crawling for charity and limping with duty, doubt and confusion entered men's minds. They said they must make merry by means of music and enforce distinctions by means of ceremony, and the empire became divided against itself. Were the uncarved wood not cut up, who could make sacrificial vessels? Were white jade left uncut, who could make the regalia of courts? Were Tao and virtue not destroyed, what use would there be for charity and duty? Were men's natural instincts not lost, what need would there be for music and ceremonies? Were the five colors not confused, who would need decorations? Were the five notes not confused, who would adopt the six pitch-pipes? Destruction of the natural integrity of things for the production of articles of various kinds -- this is the fault of the artisan. Destruction of Tao and virtue in order to introduce charity and duty -- this is the error of the Sages. Horses live on dry land, eat grass and drink water. When pleased, they rub their necks together. When angry, they turn round and kick up their heels at each other. Thus far only do their natural instincts carry them. But bridled and bitted, with a moon-shaped metal plate on their foreheads, they learn to cast vicious looks, to turn their heads to bite, to nudge at the yoke, to cheat the bit out of their mouths or steal the bridle off their heads. Thus their minds

and gestures become like those of thieves. This is the fault of Polo. In the days of Ho Hsu: {45} the people did nothing in particular at their homes and went nowhere in particular in their walks. Having food, they rejoiced; tapping their bellies, they wandered about. Thus far the natural capacities of the people carried them.

The Sages came then to make them bow and bend with ceremonies and music, in order to regulate the external forms of intercourse, and dangled charity and duty before them, in order to keep their minds in submission. Then the people began to labor and develop a taste for knowledge, and to struggle with one another in their desire for gain, to which there is no end. This is the error of the Sages.

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Opening Trunks, or A Protest against Civilization

The precautions taken against thieves who open trunks, search bags, or ransack tills, consist in securing with cords and fastening with bolts and locks. This is what the world calls wit. But a strong thief comes and carries off the till on his shoulders, with box and bag, and runs away with them. His only fear is that the cords and locks should not be strong enough! Therefore, does not what the world used to call wit simply amount to saving up for the strong thief? And I venture to state that nothing of that which the world calls wit is otherwise than saving up for strong thieves; and nothing of that which the world calls sage wisdom is other than hoarding up for strong thieves. How can this be shown? In the State of Ch'i, the neighboring towns overlooked one another and one could hear the barking of dogs and crowing of cocks in the neighboring town. Fishermen cast their nets and ploughmen ploughed the land in a territory of over two thousand li. Within its four boundaries, was there a temple or shrine dedicated, a god worshipped, or a hamlet, county or a district governed, but in accordance with the rules laid down by the Sages?

Yet one morning {46} T'ien Ch'engtse slew the ruler of Ch'i, and stole his kingdom. And not his kingdom only, but the wisdom-tricks which he had got from the Sages as well, so that although T'ien Ch'engtse acquired the reputation of a thief, he lived as securely and comfortably as ever did either Yao or Shun. The small States did not venture to blame, nor the great States to punish him, and for twelve generations his descendants ruled over Ch'i. {47}

Was this not a stealing the State of Ch'i and its wisdom-tricks of

the Sages in order to preserve their thieves' lives? I venture to ask, was there ever anything of what the world esteems as great wit otherwise than saving up for strong thieves, and was there ever anything of what the world calls sage wisdom other than hoarding up for strong thieves?

How can this be shown? Of old, Lungfeng was beheaded, Pikan was disemboweled, Changhung was sliced to death, Tsehsu: was thrown to the waves. All these four were learned ones, but they could not preserve themselves from death by punishment.

An apprentice to Robber Cheh asked him saying, "Is there then Tao (moral principles) among thieves?"

"Tell me if there is anything in which there is not Tao," Cheh replied.

"There is the sage character of thieves by which booty is located, the courage to go in first, and the chivalry of coming out last. There is the wisdom of calculating success, and kindness in the equal division of the spoil. There has never yet been a great robber who was not possessed of these five qualities." It is seen therefore that without the teachings of the Sages, good men could not keep their position, and without the teachings of the Sages, Robber Cheh could not accomplish his ends. Since good men are scarce and bad men are the majority, the good the Sages do to the world is little and the evil great. Therefore it has been said "If the lips are turned up, the teeth will be cold. It was the thinness of the wines of Lu which caused the siege of Hantan. {48}

When the Sages arose, gangsters appeared. Overthrow the Sages and set the gangsters free, and then will the empire be in order. When the stream ceases, the gully dries up, and when the hill is levelled the chasm is filled. When the Sages are dead, gangsters will not show up, but the empire will rest in peace. On the other hand, if the Sages do not pop off neither will the gangsters drop off. Nor if you double the number of Sages wherewith to govern the empire will you do more than double the profits of Robber Cheh.

If pecks and bushels are used for measurement, the pecks and bushels themselves will also be stolen, along with the rice. If scales and steel yards are used for weighing, the scales and steel yards themselves will also be stolen along with the goods. If tallies and signets are used for good faith, the tallies and signets will also be stolen. If charity and duty are used for moral principles, charity and duty will also be stolen. How is this so? Steal a hook and you hang as a crook; steal a kingdom and you are made a duke. (The teachings of) charity and duty remain in the duke's domain. Is it not true, then, that they are thieves of charity and duty and of the wisdom of the Sages?

So it is that those who follow the way of brigandage are promoted into princes and dukes. Those who are bent on stealing charity and duty together with the measures, scales, tallies, and signets can be dissuaded by no rewards of official regalia and uniform, nor deterred by fear of sharp instruments of punishment. This doubling the profits of robbers like Cheh, making it impossible to get rid of them, is the fault of the Sages.

Therefore it has been said, "Fishes must be left in the water; the sharp weapons of a state must be left where none can see them." {49} These Sages are the sharp weapons of the world; they must not be shown to the world.

Banish wisdom, discard knowledge, {50} and gangsters will stop! Fling away jade and destroy pearls, and petty thieves will cease. Burn tallies and break signets, and the people will revert to their uncouth integrity. Split measures and smash scales, and the people will not fight over quantities. Trample down all the institutions of Sages, and the people will begin to be fit for discussing (Tao). Confuse the six pitch-pipes, confine lutes and stringed instruments to the flames, stuff up the ears of Blind Shih K'uang, and each man will keep his own sense of hearing. Put an end to decorations, confuse the five colors, glue up the eyes of Li Chu, and each man will keep his own sense of sight. Destroy arcs and lines, fling away squares and compasses, snap off the fingers of Ch'ui the Artisan, and each man will use his own natural skill. Wherefore the saying, "Great skill appears like clumsiness." {5l} Cut down the activities of Tseng and Shih {52} pinch the mouths of Yang Chu and Motse, discard charity and duty, and the virtue of the people will arrive at Mystic Unity. {53}

If each man keeps his own sense of sight, the world will escape being burned up. If each man keeps his own sense of hearing, the world will escape entanglements. If each man keeps his intelligence, the world will escape confusion. If each man keeps his own virtue, the world will avoid deviation from the true path. Tseng, Shih, Yang, Mo, Shih K'uang, Ch'ui, and Li Chu were all persons who developed their external character and involved the world in the present confusion so that the laws and statutes are of no avail. Have you never heard of the Age of Perfect Nature?

In the days of Yungch'eng, Tat'ing, Pohuang, Chungyang, Lilu, Lihsu:, Hsienyu:an, Hohsu:, Tsunlu, Chuyung, Fuhsi, and Shennung, {54} the people tied knots for reckoning. They enjoyed their food, beautified their clothing, were satisfied with their homes, and delighted in their customs. Neighboring settlements overlooked one another, so that they could hear the barking of dogs and crowing of cocks of their neighbors, and the people till the end of their days had never been outside their own country. {55} In those days there was indeed perfect peace.

But nowadays any one can make the people strain their necks and stand on tiptoes by saying, "In such and such a place there is a Sage." Immediately they put together a few provisions and hurry off, neglecting their parents at home and their masters' business abroad, going on foot through the territories of the Princes, and riding to hundreds of miles away. Such is the evil effect of the rulers' desire for knowledge When the rulers desire knowledge and neglect Tao, the empire is overwhelmed with confusion.

How can this be shown? When the knowledge of bows and cross-bows and hand-nets and tailed arrows increases, then they carry confusion among the birds of the air. When the knowledge of hooks and bait and nets and traps increases, then they carry confusion among the fishes of the deep. When the knowledge of fences and nets and snares increases, then they carry confusion among the beasts of the field. When cunning and deceit and flippancy and the sophistries of the "hard" and white' and identities and differences increase in number and variety, then they overwhelm the world with logic.

Therefore it is that there is often chaos in the world, and the love of knowledge is ever at the bottom of it. For all men strive to grasp what they do not know, while none strive to grasp what they already know; and all strive to discredit what they do not excel in, while none strive to discredit what they do excel in. That is why there is chaos. Thus, above, the splendor of the heavenly bodies is dimmed; below, the power of land and water is burned up, while in between the influence of the four seasons is upset. There is not one tiny worm that moves on earth or insect that flies in the air but has lost its original nature. Such indeed is the world chaos caused by the desire for knowledge! Ever since the time of the Three Dynasties downwards, it has been like this. The simple and the guileless have been set aside; the specious and the cunning have been exalted. Tranquil inaction has given place to love of disputation; and disputation alone is enough to bring chaos upon the world.

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On Tolerance

There has been such a thing as letting mankind alone and tolerance; there has never been such a thing as governing mankind. Letting alone Springs from the fear lest men's natural dispositions be perverted and tolerance springs from the fear lest their character be corrupted. But if their natural dispositions be not perverted, nor their character corrupted, what need is there

left for government?

Of old, when Yao governed the empire, he made the people live happily; consequently the people struggled to be happy and became restless. When Chieh governed the empire he made the people live miserably; consequently the people regarded life as a burden and were discontented. Restlessness and discontent are subversive of virtue; and without virtue there has never been such a thing as stability.

When man rejoices greatly, he gravitates towards yang (the positive pole). When he is in great anger, he gravitates towards yin (the negative pole). If the equilibrium of positive and negative is disturbed, the four seasons are upset, and the balance of heat and cold is destroyed, man himself suffers physically thereby. It causes men to rejoice and sorrow inordinately, to live disorderly lives, to be vexed in their thoughts, and to lose their balance and form of conduct. When that happens, then the whole world seethes with revolt and discontent, and we have such men as Robber Cheh, Tseng, and Shih. Offer the entire world as rewards for the good or threaten the wicked with the dire punishments of the entire world, and it is still insufficient (to reform them). Consequently, with the entire world, one cannot furnish sufficient inducements or deterrents to action. From the Three Dynasties downwards, the world has lived in a helter-skelter of promotions and punishments. What chance have the people left for living the even tenor of their lives?

Besides, love (over-refinement) of vision leads to debauchery in color; love of hearing leads to debauchery in sound; love of charity leads to confusion in virtue; love of duty leads to perversion of principles; love of ceremonies (li) leads to a common fashion for technical skill; love of music leads to common lewdness of thought; love of wisdom leads to a fashion for the arts; and love of knowledge leads to a fashion for criticism If the people are allowed to live out the even tenor of their lives, the above eight may or may not be; it matters not. But if the people are not allowed to live out the even tenor of their lives, then these eight cause discontent and contention and strife, and throw the world into chaos.

Yet the world worships and cherishes them. Indeed deep-seated is the mental chaos of the world. Is it merely a passing mistake that can be simply removed? Yet they observe fasts before their discussion, bend down on their knees to practise them, and sing and beat the drum and dance to celebrate them. What can I do about it?

Therefore, when a gentleman is unavoidably compelled to take charge of the government of the empire, there is nothing better than inaction (letting alone). By means of inaction only can he allow the people to live out the even tenor of their lives. Therefore

he who values the world as his own self may then be entrusted with the government of the world and he who loves the world as his own self may then be entrusted with the care of the world. {56} Therefore if the gentleman can refrain from disturbing the internal economy of man, and from glorifying the powers of sight and hearing, he can sit still like a corpse or spring into action like a dragon, be silent as the deep or talk with the voice of thunder, the movements of his spirit calling forth the natural mechanism of Heaven. He can remain calm and leisurely doing nothing, while all things are brought to maturity and thrive. What need then would have I to set about governing the world?

Ts'ui Chu: asked Lao Tan {57} , saying, "If the empire is not to be governed, how are men's hearts to be kept good?"

"Be careful," replied Lao Tan, "not to interfere with the natural goodness of the heart of man. Man's heart may be forced down or stirred up. In each case the issue is fatal. By gentleness, the hardest heart may be softened. But try to cut and polish it, and it will glow like fire or freeze like ice. In the twinkling of an eye it will pass beyond the limits of the Four Seas. In repose, it is profoundly still; in motion, it flies up to the sky. Like an unruly horse, it cannot be held in check. Such is the human heart."

Of old, the Yellow Emperor first interfered with the natural goodness of the heart of man, by means of charity and duty. In consequence, Yao and Shun wore the hair off their legs and the flesh off their arms in endeavoring to feed their people's bodies. They tortured the people's internal economy in order to conform to charity and duty. They exhausted the people's energies to live in accordance with the laws and statutes. Even then they did not succeed. Thereupon, Yao (had to) confine Huantou on Mount Ts'ung, exile the chiefs of the Three Miaos and their people into the Three Weis, and banish the Minister of Works to Yutu, which shows he had not succeeded. When it came to the times of the Three Kings, {58} the empire was in a state of foment. Among the bad men were Chieh and Cheh; among the good were Tseng and Shih. By and by, the Confucianists and the Motseanists arose; and then came confusion between joy and anger, fraud between the simple and the cunning, recrimination between the virtuous and the evil-minded, slander between the honest and the liars, and the world order collapsed. Then the great virtue lost its unity, men's lives were frustrated. When there was a general rush for knowledge, the people's desires ever went beyond their possessions. The next thing was then to invent axes and saws, to kill by laws and statutes, to disfigure by chisels and awls. The empire seethed with discontent, the blame for which rests upon those who would interfere with the natural goodness of the heart of man.

In consequence, virtuous men sought refuge in mountain caves, while rulers of great states sat trembling in their ancestral halls. Then, when dead men lay about pillowed on each other's corpses, when cangued prisoners jostled each other in crowds and condemned criminals were seen everywhere, then the Confucianists and the Motseanists bustled about and rolled up their sleeves in the midst of gyves and fetters! Alas, they know not shame, nor what it is to blush!

Until I can say that the wisdom of Sages is not a fastener of cangues, and that charity of heart and duty to one's neighbor are not bolts for gyves, how should I know that Tseng and Shih were not the singing arrows {59} (forerunners) of (the gangsters) Chieh and Cheh? Therefore it is said, "Abandon wisdom and discard knowledge, and the empire will be at peace."

The Yellow Emperor sat on the throne for nineteen years, and his laws obtained all over the empire. Hearing that Kuangch'engtse was living on Mount K'ungt'ung, he went there to see him, and said, "I am told that you are in possession of perfect Tao. May I ask what is the essence of this perfect Tao? I desire to obtain the essence of the universe to secure good harvests and feed my people. I should like also to control the yin and yang principles to fulfil the life of all living things."

"What you are asking about," replied Kuangch'engtse, "is merely the dregs of things. What you wish to control are the disintegrated factors thereof. Ever since the empire was governed by you, the clouds have rained before thickening, the foliage of trees has fallen before turning yellow, and the brightness of the sun and moon has increasingly paled. You have the shallowness of mind of a glib talker. How then are you fit to speak of perfect Tao?"

The Yellow Emperor withdrew. He resigned the Throne. He built himself a solitary hut, and sat upon white straw. For three months he remained in seclusion, and then went again to see Kuangch'engtse.

The latter was lying with his head towards the south. The Yellow Emperor approached from below upon his knees. Kowtowing twice upon the ground, he said, "I am told that you are in possession of perfect Tao. May I ask how to order one's life so that one may have long life?"

Kuangch'engtse jumped up with a start. "A good question indeed!" cried he. "Come, and I will speak to you of perfect Tao. The essence of perfect Tao is profoundly mysterious; its extent is lost in obscurity. "See nothing; hear nothing; guard your spirit in quietude and your body will go right of its own accord.

"Be quiet, be pure; toil not your body, perturb not your vital

essence, and you will live for ever.

"For if the eye sees nothing, and the ear hears nothing, and the mind thinks nothing, your spirit will stay in your body, and the body will thereby live for ever.

"Cherish that which is within you, and shut off that which is without for much knowledge is a curse.

"Then I will take you to that abode of Great Light to reach the Plateau of Absolute Yang. I will lead you through the Door of the Dark Unknown to the Plateau of the Absolute Yin.

"The Heaven and Earth have their separate functions. The yin and yang have their hidden root. Guard carefully your body, and material things will prosper by themselves.

"I guard the original One, and rest in harmony with externals. Therefore I have been able to live for twelve hundred years and my body has not grown old."

The Yellow Emperor kowtowed twice and said, "Kuangch'engtse is surely God.

"Come," said Kuangch'engtse, "I will tell you. That thing is eternal; yet all men think it mortal. That thing is infinite; yet all men think it finite. Those who possess my Tao are princes in this life and rulers in the hereafter. Those who do not possess my Tao behold the light of day in this life and become clods of earth in the hereafter.

"Nowadays, all living things spring from the dust and to the dust return. But I will lead you through the portals of Eternity to wander in the great wilds of Infinity. My light is the light of sun and moon. My life is the life of Heaven and Earth. Before me all is nebulous; behind me all is dark, unknown. Men may all die, but I endure for ever."

When General Clouds was going eastwards, he passed through the branches of Fuyao (a magic tree) and happened to meet Great Nebulous. The latter was slapping his thighs and hopping about. When General Clouds saw him, he stopped like one lost and stood still, saying, "Who are you, old man, and what are you doing here?"

"Strolling!" replied Great Nebulous, still slapping his thighs and hopping about.

"I want to ask about something," said General Clouds.

"Ough!" uttered Great Nebulous.

"The spirits of Heaven are out of harmony," said General Clouds; "the spirits of the Earth are smothered; the six influences {61} of the weather do not work together, and the four seasons are no longer regular. I desire to blend the essence of the six influences and nourish all living beings. What am I to do?"

"I do not know! I do not know!" cried Great Nebulous, shaking his head, while still slapping his thighs and hopping about.

So General Clouds did not press his question. Three years later, when passing eastwards through the plains of the Sungs, he again fell in with Great Nebulous. The former was overjoyed, and hurrying up, said, "Has your Holiness {62} forgotten me? Has your Holiness forgotten me?" He then kowtowed twice and desired to be allowed to interrogate Great Nebulous; but the latter said, "I wander on without knowing what I want. I rush about without knowing whither I am going. I simply stroll about, watching unexpected events. What should I know?"

"I too regard myself as rushing about," answered General Clouds; "but the people follow my movements. I cannot escape the people and what I do they follow. I would gladly receive some advice."

"That the scheme of empire is in confusion," said Great Nebulous, "that the conditions of life are violated, that the will of the Dark Heaven is not accomplished, that the beasts of the field are scattered, that the birds of the air cry at night, that blight strikes the trees and herbs, that destruction spreads among the creeping things, -- this, alas! is the fault of those who would rule others."

"True," replied General Clouds, "but what am I to do?"

"Ah!" cried Great Nebulous, "keep quiet and go home in peace!"

"It is not often," urged General Clouds, "that I meet with your Holiness. I would gladly receive some advice."

"Ah," said Great Nebulous, "nourish your heart. Rest in inaction, and the world will be reformed of itself. Forget your body and spit forth intelligence. Ignore all differences and become one with the Infinite. Release your mind, and free your spirit. Be vacuous, be devoid of soul. Thus will things grow and prosper and return to their Root. Returning to their Root without their knowing it, the result will be a formless whole which will never be cut up. To know it is to cut it up. Ask not about its name, inquire not into its nature, and all things will flourish of themselves."

"Your Holiness," said General Clouds, "has informed me with power and taught me silence. What I had long sought, I have now found." Thereupon he kowtowed twice and took leave.

The people of this world all rejoice in others being like themselves, and object to others being different from themselves. Those who make friends with their likes and do not make friends with their unlikes, are influenced by a desire to be above the others. But how can those who desire to be above the others ever be above the others? Rather than base one's Judgment on the opinions of the many, let each look after his own affairs. But those who desire to govern kingdoms clutch at the advantages of (the systems of) the Three Kings {63} without seeing the troubles involved. In fact, they are trusting the fortunes of a country to luck, but what country will be lucky enough to escape destruction? Their chances of preserving it do not amount to one in ten thousand, while their chances of destroying it are ten thousand to nothing and even more. Such, alas! is the ignorance of rulers.

For to have a territory is to have something great. He who has some thing great must not regard the material things as material things. Only by not regarding material things as material things can one be the lord of things. The principle of looking at material things as not real things is not confined to mere government of the empire. Such a one may wander at will between the six limits of space or travel over the Nine Continents unhampered and free. This is to be the Unique One. The Unique One is the highest among men.

The doctrine of the great man is (fluid) as shadow to form, as echo to sound. Ask and it responds, fulfilling its abilities as the help-mate of humanity. Noiseless in repose, objectless in motion, he brings you out of the confusion of your coming and going to wander in the Infinite. Formless in his movements, he is eternal with the sun. In respect of his bodily existence, he conforms to the universal standards. Through conformance to the universal standards, he forgets his own individuality. But if he forgets his individuality, how can he regard his possessions as possessions? Those who see possessions in possessions were the wise men of old. Those who regard not possessions as possessions are the friends of Heaven and Earth.

That which is low, but must be let alone, is matter. That which is humble, but still must be followed, is the people. That which is always there but still has to be attended to, is affairs. That which is inadequate, but still has to be set forth, is the law. That which is remote from Tao, but still claims our attention, is duty. That which is biassed, but must be broadened, is charity. Trivial, but requiring to be strengthened from within, that is ceremony. Contained within, but requiring to be uplifted, that is virtue. One, but not to be without modification, that is Tao. Spiritual, yet not to be devoid of action, that is God. Therefore the Sage looks up to God, but does not offer to aid. He perfects his virtue, but does not involve himself. He guides himself by Tao, but makes no plans. He

identifies himself with charity, but does not rely on it. He performs his duties towards his neighbors, but does not set store by them. He responds to ceremony, without avoiding it. He undertakes affairs without declining them, and metes out law without confusion. He relies on the people and does not make light of them. He accommodates himself to matter and does not ignore it. Things are not worth attending to, yet they have to be attended to. He who does not understand God will not be pure in character. He who has not clear apprehension of Tao will not know where to begin. And he who is not enlightened by Tao, --alas indeed for him! What then is Tao? There is the Tao of God, and there is the Tao of man. Honour through inaction comes from the Tao of God: entanglement through action comes from the Tao of man. The Tao of God is fundamental: the Tao of man is accidental. The distance which separates them is great. Let us all take heed thereto!

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Autumn Floods

In the time of autumn floods, a hundred streams poured into the river. It swelled in its turbid course, so that it was impossible to tell a cow from a horse on the opposite banks or on the islets. Then the Spirit of the River laughed for joy that all the beauty of the earth was gathered to himself. Down the stream he journeyed east, until he reached the North Sea. There, looking eastwards and seeing no limit to its wide expanse, his countenance began to change. And as he gazed over the ocean, he sighed and said to North-Sea Jo, "A vulgar proverb says that he who has heard a great many truths thinks no one equal to himself. And such a one am I. Formerly when I heard people detracting from the learning of Confucius or underrating the heroism of Po Yi, I did not believe it. But now that I have looked upon your inexhaustibility -- alas for me ! had I not reached your abode, I should have been for ever a laughing stock to those of great enlightenment!"

To this North-Sea Jo (the Spirit of the Ocean) replied, "You cannot speak of ocean to a well-frog, which is limited by his abode. You cannot speak of ice to a summer insect, which is limited by his short life. You cannot speak of Tao to a pedagogue, who is limited in his knowledge. But now that you have emerged from your narrow sphere and have seen the great ocean, you know your own insignificance, and I can speak to you of great principles.

"There is no body of water beneath the canopy of heaven which is greater than the ocean. All streams pour into it without cease, yet it does not overflow. It is being continually drained off at the

Tail-Gate {65} yet it is never empty. Spring and autumn bring no change; floods and droughts are equally unknown. And thus it is immeasurably superior to mere rivers and streams. Yet I have never ventured to boast on this account. For I count myself, among the things that take shape from the universe and receive life from the yin and yang, but as a pebble or a small tree on a vast mountain. Only too conscious of my own insignificance, how can I presume to boast of my greatness?

"Are not the Four Seas to the universe but like ant-holes in a marsh? Is not the Middle Kingdom to the surrounding ocean like a tare-seed in a granary? Of all the myriad created things, man is but one. And of all those who inhabit the Nine Continents, live on the fruit of the earth, and move about in cart and boat, an individual man is but one. Is not he, as compared with all creation, but as the tip of a hair upon a horse's body?

"The succession of the Five Rulers {66}, the contentions of the Three Kings, the concerns of the kind-hearted, the labors of the administrators, are but this and nothing more. Po Yi refused the throne for fame. Chungni (Confucius) discoursed to get a reputation for learning. This over-estimation of self on their part -- was it not very much like your own previous self-estimation in reference to water?"

"Very well," replied the Spirit of the River, "am I then to regard the universe as great and the tip of a hair as small?"

"Not at all," said the Spirit of the Ocean. "Dimensions are limitless; time is endless. Conditions are not constant; terms are not final. Thus, the wise man looks into space, and does not regard the small as too little, nor the great as too much; for he knows that there is no limit to dimensions. He looks back into the past, and does not grieve over what is far off, nor rejoice over what is near; for he knows that time is without end. He investigates fullness and decay, and therefore does not rejoice if he succeeds, nor lament if he fails; for he knows that conditions are not constant. He who clearly apprehends the scheme of existence does not rejoice over life, nor repine at death; for he knows that terms are not final.

"What man knows is not to be compared with what he does not know. The span of his existence is not to be compared with the span of his non-existence. To strive to exhaust the infinite by means of the infinitesimal necessarily lands him in confusion and unhappiness. How then should one be able to say that the tip of a hair is the ne plus ultra of smallness, or that the universe is the ne plus ultra of greatness?"

"Dialecticians of the day," replied the Spirit of the River, "all say that the infinitesimal has no form, and that the infinite is beyond all measurement. Is that true?"

"If we look at the great from the standpoint of the small," said the Spirit of the Ocean, "we cannot reach its limit; and if we look at the small from the standpoint of the great, it eludes our sight. The infinitesimal is a subdivision of the small; the colossal is an extension of the great. In this sense the two fall into different categories. This lies in the nature of circumstances. Now smallness and greatness presuppose form. That which is without form cannot be divided by numbers, and that which is above measurement cannot be measured. The greatness of anything may be a topic of discussion, and the smallness of anything may be mentally imagined. But that which can be neither a topic of discussion nor imagined mentally cannot be said to have greatness or smallness.

"Therefore, the truly great man does not injure others and does not credit himself with charity and mercy. He seeks not gain, but does not despise the servants who do. He struggles not for wealth, but does not lay great value on his modesty. He asks for help from no man, but is not proud of his self-reliance, neither does he despise the greedy. He acts differently from the vulgar crowd, but does not place high value on being different or eccentric; nor because he acts with the majority does he despise those that flatter a few. The ranks and emoluments of the world are to him no cause for joy; its punishments and shame no cause for disgrace. He knows that right and wrong cannot be distinguished, that great and small cannot be defined.

"I have heard say, 'The man of Tao has no (concern) reputation; the truly virtuous has no (concern for) possessions; the truly great man ignores self.' This is the height of self-discipline."

"But how then," asked the Spirit of the River, "arise the distinctions of high and low, of great and small in the material and immaterial aspects of things?"

"From the point of view of Tao," replied the Spirit of the Ocean, "there are no such distinctions of high and low. From the point of view of individuals, each holds himself high and holds others low. From the vulgar point of view, high and low (honors and dishonor) are some thing conferred by others. "In regard to distinctions, if we say that a thing is great or small by its own standard of great or small, then there is nothing in all creation which is not great, nothing which is not small. To know that the universe is but as a tare-seed, and the tip of a hair is (as big as) a mountain, -- this is the expression of relativity {67}

"In regard to function, if we say that something exists or does not exist, by its own standard of existence or non- existence, then there is nothing which does not exist, nothing which does not perish from existence. If we know that east and west are convertible and yet necessary terms in relation to each other, then such (relative)

functions may be determined.

"In regard to man's desires or interests, if we say that anything is good or bad because it is either good or bad according to our individual (subjective) standards, then there is nothing which is not good, nothing -- which is not bad. If we know that Yao and Chieh each regarded himself as good and the other as bad, then the (direction of) their interests becomes apparent.

"Of old Yao and Shun abdicated (in favor of worthy successors) and the rule was maintained, while Kuei (Prince of Yen) abdicated (in favor of Tsechih) and the latter failed. T'ang and Wu got the empire by fighting, while by fighting, Po Kung lost it. From this it may be seen that the value of abdicating or fighting, of acting like Yao or like Chieh, varies according to time, and may not be regarded as a constant principle. "A battering-ram can knock down a wall, but it cannot repair a breach. Different things are differently applied. Ch'ichi and Hualiu (famous horses) could travel 1,000 li in one day, but for catching rats they were not equal to a wild cat. Different animals possess different aptitudes. An owl can catch fleas at night, and see the tip of a hair, but if it comes out in the daytime it can open wide its eyes and yet fail to see a mountain. Different creatures are differently constituted.

"Thus, those who say that they would have right without its correlate, wrong; or good government without its correlate, misrule, do not apprehend the great principles of the universe, nor the nature of all creation. One might as well talk of the existence of Heaven without that of Earth, or of the negative principle without the positive, which is clearly impossible. Yet people keep on discussing it without stop; such people must be either fools or knaves.

"Rulers abdicated under different conditions, and the Three Dynasties succeeded each other under different conditions. Those who came at the wrong time and went against the tide are called usurpers. Those who came at the right time and fitted in with their age are called defenders of Right. Hold your peace, Uncle River. How can you know the distinctions of high and low and of the houses of the great and small?'

"In this case," replied the Spirit of the River, "what am I to do about declining and accepting, following and abandoning (courses of action)?"

"From the point of view of Tao," said the Spirit of the Ocean.

"How can we call this high and that low? For there is (the process of) reverse evolution (uniting opposites). To follow one absolute course would involve great departure from Tao. What is much? What is little? Be thankful for the gift. To follow a one-sided

opinion is to diverge from Tao. Be exalted, as the ruler of a State whose administration is impartial. Be at ease, as the Deity of the Earth, whose dispensation is impartial. Be expansive, like the points of the compass, boundless without a limit. Embrace all creation, and none shall be more sheltered or helped than another. This is to be without bias. And all things being equal, how can one say which is long and which is short? Tao is without beginning, without end. The material things are born and die, and no credit is taken for their development. Emptiness and fullness alternate, and their relations are not fixed. Past years cannot be recalled; time cannot be arrested. The succession of growth and decay, of increase and diminution, goes in a cycle, each end becoming a new beginning. In this sense only may we discuss the ways of truth and the principles of the universe. The life of things passes by like a rushing, galloping horse, changing at every turn, at every hour. What should one do, or what should one not do? Let the (cycle of) changes go on by themselves!"

"If this is the case," said the Spirit of the River, "what is the value of Tao?"

"Those who understand Tao," answered the Spirit of the Ocean {68} "must necessarily apprehend the eternal principles and those who apprehend the eternal principles must understand their application. Those who understand their application do not suffer material things to injure them. "The man of perfect virtue cannot be burnt by fire, nor drowned by water, nor hurt by the cold of winter or the heat of summer, nor torn by bird or beast. Not that he makes light of these; but that he discriminates between safety and danger, is happy under prosperous and adverse circumstances alike, and cautious in his choice of action, so that none can harm him.

"Therefore it has been said that Heaven (the natural) abides within man (the artificial) without. Virtue abides in the natural. Knowledge of the action of the natural and of the artificial has its basis in the natural its destination in virtue. Thus, whether moving forward or backwards whether yielding or asserting, there is always a reversion to the essential and to the ultimate."

"What do you mean," enquired the Spirit of the River, "by the natural and the artificial?"

"Horses and oxen," answered the Spirit of the Ocean, "have four feet. That is the natural. Put a halter on a horse's head, a string through a bullock's nose. That is the artificial.

"Therefore it has been said, do not let the artificial obliterate the natural; do not let will obliterate destiny; do not let virtue be sacrificed to fame. Diligently observe these precepts without fail, and thus you will revert to the True."

The walrus {69} envies the centipede; the centipede envies the snake; the snake envies the wind; the wind envies the eye; and the eye envies the mind. The walrus said to the centipede, "I hop about on one leg but not very successfully. How do you manage all those legs you have?"

"I don't manage them," replied the centipede. "Have you never seen saliva? When it is ejected, the big drops are the size of pearls, the small ones like mist. At random they fall, in countless numbers. So, too, does my natural mechanism move, without my knowing how I do it."

The centipede said to the snake, "With all my legs I do not move as fast as you with none. How is that?"

"One's natural mechanism," replied the snake, "is not a thing to be changed. What need have I for legs?"

The snake said to the wind, "I wriggle about by moving my spine, as if I had legs. Now you seem to be without form, and yet you come blustering down from the North Sea to bluster away to the South Sea How do you do it?"

"'Tis true," replied the wind, "that I bluster as you say. But anyone who sticks his finger or his foot into me, excels me. On the other hand, I can tear away huge trees and destroy large buildings. This power is given only to me. Out of many minor defeats I win the big victory {70}. And to win a big victory is given only to the Sages."

When Confucius visited K'uang, the men of Sung surrounded him by several cordons. Yet he went on singing to his guitar without stop. "How is it, Master," enquired Tselu, "that you are so cheerful?"

"Come here," replied Confucius, "and I will tell you. For a long time I have not been willing to admit failure, but in vain. Fate is against me. For a long time I have been seeking success, but in vain. The hour has not come. In the days of Yao and Shun, no man throughout the empire was a failure, though this was not due to their cleverness. In the days of Chieh and Chou, no man throughout the empire was a success, though this was not due to their stupidity. The circumstances happened that way.

"To travel by water without fear of sea-serpents and dragons, -- this is the courage of the fisherman. To travel by land without fear of the wild buffaloes and tigers, -- this is the courage of hunters. When bright blades cross, to look on death as on life, -- this is the courage of the warrior. To know that failure is fate and that success is opportunity, and to remain fearless in times of great danger, -- this is the courage of the Sage. Stop bustling, Yu! My

destiny is controlled (by someone).

Shortly afterwards, the captain of the troops came in and apologized, saying, "We thought you were Yang Hu; that was why we surrounded you. We find we have made a mistake." Whereupon he apologized and retired.

Kungsun Lung {71} said to Mou of Wei, "When young I studied the teachings of the elders. When I grew up, I understood the morals of charity and duty. I learned to level together similarities and differences, to confound arguments on "hardness" and "whiteness", to affirm what others deny, and justify what others dispute. I vanquished the wisdom of all the philosophers, and overcame the arguments of all people. I thought that I had indeed understood everything. But now that I have heard Chuangtse, I am lost in astonishment. I know not whether it is in arguing or in knowledge that I am not equal to him. I can no longer open my mouth. May I ask you to impart to me the secret?"

Prince Mou leaned over the table and sighed. Then he looked up to heaven and laughed, saying, "Have you never heard of the frog in the shallow well? The frog said to the turtle of the Eastern Sea, 'What a great time I am having! I hop to the rail around the well, and retire to rest in the hollow of some broken bricks. Swimming, I float on my armpits, resting my jaws just above the water. Plunging into the mud, I bury my feet up to the foot-arch, and not one of the cockles, crabs or tadpoles I see around me are my match. Besides, to occupy such a pool all alone and possess a shallow well is to be as happy as anyone can be. Why do you not come and pay me a visit?'

"Now before the turtle of the Eastern Sea had got its left leg down its right knee had already stuck fast, and it shrank back and begged to be excused. It then told the frog about the sea, saying, 'A thousand li would not measure its breadth, nor a thousand fathoms its depth. In the days of the Great Yu:, there were nine years of flood out of ten; but this did not add to its bulk. In the days of T'ang, there were seven years of drought out of eight; but this did not make its shores recede. Not to be affected by the passing of time, and not to be affected by increase or decrease of water, -- such is the great happiness of the Eastern Sea.' At this the frog of the shallow well was considerably astonished and felt very small, like one lost.

"For one whose knowledge does not yet appreciate the niceties of true and false to attempt to understand Chuangtse, is like a mosquito trying to carry a mountain, or an insect trying to swim a river. Of course he will fail. Moreover, one whose knowledge does not reach to the subtlest teachings, yet is satisfied with temporary success, -- is not he like the frog in the well?

"Chuangtse is now climbing up from the realms below to reach high heaven. For him no north or south; lightly the four points are gone, engulfed in the unfathomable. For him no east or west - starting from the Mystic Unknown, he returns to the Great Unity. And yet you think you are going to find his truth by dogged inquiries and arguments! This is like looking at the sky through a tube, or pointing at the earth with an awl. Is not this being petty?

"Have you never heard how a youth of Shouling went to study the walking gait at Hantan? {72} Before he could learn the Hantan gait, he had forgotten his own way of walking, and crawled back home on all fours. If you do not go away now, you will forget what you have and lose your own professional knowledge." Kungsun Lung's jaw hung open, his tongue clave to his palate, and he slunk away.

Chuangtse was fishing on the P'u River when the Prince of Ch'u sent two high officials to see him and said, "Our Prince desires to burden you with the administration of the Ch'u State." Chuangtse went on fishing without turning his head and said, "I have heard that in Ch'u there is a sacred tortoise which died when it was three thousand (years) old. The prince keeps this tortoise carefully enclosed in a chest in his ancestral temple. Now would this tortoise rather be dead and have its remains venerated, or would it rather be alive and wagging its tail in the mud?"

"It would rather be alive," replied the two officials, and wagging its tail in the mud."

"Begone!" cried Chuangtse. "I too will wag my tail in the mud.

Hueitse was Prime Minister in the Liang State, and Chuangtse was on his way to see him. Someone remarked, "Chuangtse has come. He wants to be minister in your place." Thereupon Hueitse was afraid, and searched all over the country for three days and three nights to find him.

Then Chuangtse went to see him, and said, "In the south there is a bird. It is a kind of phoenix. Do you know it? When it starts from the South Sea to fly to the North Sea, it would not alight except on the wu-t'ung tree. It eats nothing but the fruit of the bamboo, drinks nothing but the purest spring water. An owl which had got the rotten carcass of a rat, looked up as the phoenix flew by, and screeched. Are you not screeching at me over your kingdom of Liang?"

Chuangtse and Hueitse had strolled on to the bridge over the Hao, when the former observed, "See how the small fish are darting about! That is the happiness of the fish."

"You not being a fish yourself," said Hueitse, "how can you know

the happiness of the fish?"

"And you not being I," retorted Chuangtse, "how can you know that I do not know?"

"If I, not being you, cannot know what you know," urged Hueitse, "it follows that you, not being a fish, cannot know the happiness of the fish."

"Let us go back to your original question," said Chuangtse. "You asked me how I knew the happiness of the fish. Your very question shows that you knew that I knew. I knew it (from my own feelings) on this bridge."

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Translator's Notes

{1} He is reputed to have lived 800 years.

{2} 1783 B.C.

{3} Philosopher about whose life nothing is known. The book Liehtse is considered a later compilation. See the section "Parables of Ancient Philosophers."

{4} The wind.

{5} 2357 B.C.

{6} Sage emperors/

{7} A sophist and friend of Chuangtse who often carried on debates with him.

{8} Agitations of the soul (music of Heaven) compared to the agitations of the forest (music of Earth).

{9} Lit. "true lord."

{10} Shih and fei mean general moral judgments and mental distinctions; "right" and "wrong," "true" and "false," "is" and "is not," "affirmative" and "negative," also "to justify" and "condemn," "to affirm" and "deny."

{11} The followers of Motse were powerful rivals of the Confucianists in Chuangtse's days. See the selections

from Motse.

{12} The meaning of these two sentences is made clear by a line below. "But if we put the different categories in one. then the differences of category cease to exist."

{13} Ch'eng and k'uei, lit. "whole" and "deficient."

"Wholeness" refers to unspoiled unity of Tao. In the following sentences, ch'eng is used in the sense of "success " It is explained by commentators that the "wholeness" of music exists only in silence, and that as soon as one note is struck, other notes are necessarily held in abeyance. The same thing is true of arguments: when we argue, we necessarily cut up truth by emphasizing certain aspects of it.

{14} See Laotse, Ch. 42.

{15} See Laotse, Ch. 5.

{16} See Laotse, Ch. 58.

{17} Lit. in the "Palace of Heaven."

{18} Personal name of Chuangtse. "tse" being the equivalent of "Master."

{19} An important idea that recurs frequently in Chuangtse, all things are in constant flow and change, but are different aspects of the One.

{20} Best disciple of Confucius.

{21} Lit. "regarded as sons (ie. fathered) by Heaven."

{22} The first part of this song is found in the Analects.

{23} This chapter deals entirely with deformitiesa literary device for emphasizing the contrast of the inner and the outer man.

{24} A well-known historical person, a model minister referred to in the Analects.

{25} Lit. "The outside of frame and bones."

{26} Hueitse often discusses the nature of attributes, like the "hardness" and "whiteness" of objects.

{27} All of these historical and semi-historical persons were good men who lost their lives, by drowning or

starving themselves, or pretending insanity, in protest against a wicked world, or just to avoid being called into office.

{28} General attitude of fluidity towards life.

{29} Mythical emperor (2852 B.C.) said to have discovered the principles of mutations of Yin and Yang.

{30} With a man's head but a beast's body.

{31} A river spirit.

{32} A mountain god.

{33} A semi-mythical ruler, who ruled in 2698-2597 B.C.

{34} A semi-mythical ruler, who ruled in 25I4-2417 B.C., shortly before Emperor Yao.

{35} A water god with a human face and a bird's body.

{36} A monarch of the Shang Dynasty, 1324-l266 B.C.100

{37} A famous sword.

{38} Personal name of Confucius.

{39} Huang-chung and ta-lu: were the standard pitchpipes.

{40} Tseng Ts'an and Shih Yu:, disciples of Confucius.

{41} I Yang chu and Motse (Mo Ti).

{42} Beginning with this phrase there is a marked change in style and vocabulary in this part.

{43} Because he refused to serve the new dynasty.

{44} Sun Yang, 658-619 B.C.

{45} A mythical ruler.

{46} 481 B.C.

{47} There is an anachronism here for Chuangtse lived to see only the ninth generation of T'iens, At least the number "twelve" must have been slipped in by a later scribe. This evidence is not sufficient to vitiate the

whole chapter, as some "textual critics" claim.

{48} Reference to a story. The states Lu and Chao both presented wine to the King of Ch'u. By the trickery of a servant, the flasks were exchanged, and Chao was blamed for presenting bad wine, and its city Hantan was beseiged.

{49} See Laotse, Ch. 36.

{50} See Laotse, Ch. 19.

{51} See Laotse, Ch. 45.

{52} See Note 40.

{53} See Laotse, Ch. 1.

{54} All legendary ancient rulers.

{55} Cf. Laotse, Ch. 80.

{56} See Laotse, Ch. 13.

{57} Laotse, Tan being one of the personal names of Laotse (Li Tan, or Li Erh). "Lao" means "old," while "Li" is the family name.

{58} The founders of the three dynasties, Hsia, Shang and Chou (2205-222 B.C.)

{59} Signal for attack.

{60} Lit. "Heaven."

{61} Yin, yang, wind, rain, light and darkness.

{62} Great Nebulous is here addressed as "Heaven." See Note 60.

{63} See Note 58.

{64} This chapter further develops the ideas in Chapter "On Levelling All Things" and contains the important philosophical concept of relativity.

{65} Wei-Lu:, a mythical hole in the bottom or end of the ocean.

{66} Mythical rulers before the Three Kings.

{67} Lit. "levelling of ranks or distinctions."

{68} From here on to the end of this paragraph, most of the passages are rhymed.

{69} K'uei, a mythical, one-legged animal.

{70} Now a slogan used in China in the war against Japan.

{71} A Neo-Motseanist (of the Sophist school) who lived after Chuangtse. This section must have been added by the latter's disciples, as is easy to see from the three stories about Chuangtse which follow.

{72} Capital of Chao.

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